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**Research Report**

# Results of an Evaluation of the Peer Support Program at Joliette Institution for Women

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# Results of an Evaluation of the Peer Support Program at Joliette Institution for Women

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides results of a preliminary evaluation of the Peer Support Team (PST) program at Joliette Institution for Women. In brief, the PST program involves intensive training for women inmates to provide emotional support to their peers. Graduates of peer support training (team members) become 'pseudo-counselors' and are sanctioned to provide support services to their co-inmates upon request.

The assessment of this program incorporated both quantitative and qualitative analyses in a multimethod research design. At the time of data collection for this evaluation, peer support was a new program at Joliette. Despite this, the PST program was noted to have developed its own place and function at the facility. Results revealed that inmates and staff were generally familiar with the program and its purpose. However, evaluation data showed a need for both staff and inmates to be more educated regarding the particulars of the PST (e.g., names of the team members, process to request/ facilitate a peer support session).

Approximately half of the inmates surveyed reported that they had used peer support services on at least one occasion. Those who had received peer counseling conveyed satisfaction with the service. The PST was found to be especially useful for those offenders in segregation and/or those with mental health problems. The data suggest a need for newly admitted inmates to be informed about, and introduced to, the PST. Peer support could be particularly helpful for them in adjusting to the institutional environment.

Peer support training at Joliette was rated positively by those involved. The training manual, coordinators, and volunteer facilitators were considered informative and helpful. Both staff and inmates agreed that those engaged in peer support training benefited personally from the experience. Evaluation results also suggest that PST training and membership helps those involved define their goals and interests and reinforces the effects of other programs. Importantly, however, only bilingual (French - English) inmates were permitted to participate in the PST training.

Results of this evaluation also suggest that some improvements could be made in the area of communication between the Coordinator, institutional staff, and team members at Joliette. The lack of communication may be due to the fact that there is no Steering Committee for peer support, or that there are few scheduled meetings between the Coordinator and team members. Moreover, contrary to protocol, team members rarely keep records of their support sessions. Finally, there was inconsistent facilitation of PST sessions by staff.

Overall, the data suggest that the PST plays and effective role in individual crisis intervention, and a somewhat effective role in institutional crisis intervention and post-crisis resolution. Barring a few minor implementation and procedural concerns, the benefits of the PST program are clear and conclusive. The program is empowering to both team members and support recipients. It is well used and well regarded by both staff and inmates at Joliette Institution for women.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Peer Support program is a peer counseling service available to inmates at federal women's institutions. The Peer Support Team (PST) is made up of inmates who are trained in peer counseling and crisis intervention counseling, and they volunteer their time to provide theses services to inmates who request emotional support because they feel they need it (i.e. if they are feeling depressed, angry, lonely, or upset).

The PST program originated from recommendations made by Jan Heney, a psychologist at the Prison for Women (P4W). Heney (1990), noted that in times of crisis, inmates at P4W created a support network for each other. She recommended that this existing support network be recognized and legitimized in the form of a program. Accordingly, the PST program was founded at P4W, following Heney's recommendations.

In 1990, a Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women recommended the decentralization and revision of services at P4W. Based on these recommendations, four regional women's institutions; Edmonton Institution (EIFW), Grand Valley Institution (GVI), Joliette Institution and Nova Institution were created. Currently, the majority of incarcerated women are housed at these four regional women's facilities. Treatment programs at the regional women's facilities follow a paradigm that is "holistic, woman-centered, culturally sensitive and support[s] the development of ...autonomy and self-esteem" (Correctional Service of Canada, 1992). Like other programs, the PST program was developed and implemented in accordance with this philosophy of women's corrections. It was first implemented at P4W and later re-established at the four regional women's facilities.

The Peer support program is exclusive to the women's facilities and has not been implemented at men's correctional institutions. It is a unique program as it involves inmates helping one another. As such, it is essential to evaluate the PST program at each of the four regional women's facilities.

Therefore, a pilot study implementing the evaluation framework for the PST program was conducted at EIFW (Blanchette & Eljdupovic-Guzina, 1998). Eljdupovic-Guzina and Blanchette (1997) developed an evaluation framework to evaluate the PST program. This framework was developed through evaluation of relevant literature, consultation with advisors from the Women Offender Sector and the Research Branch (National Headquarters, Correctional Service of Canada), and consultation with staff or former staff from P4W and the regional women's facilities. The framework includes a program logic model, an evaluation matrix, methodological issues, and protocols for various proposed assessment instruments.

The second regional facility to implement the PST program was GVI in the Ontario region in 1998. Later that same year, Joliette Institution for women in the Québec region implemented the PST program. Finally, Nova Institution for women in the Atlantic region implemented the PST program in 1999. Separate evaluations of the program were conducted at each of the regional women's facilities. This evaluation focuses only on the PST program at Joliette Institution for Women.

This evaluation is comprised of three major parts: method, results, and conclusions. The method section describes the sample and discusses the instruments and procedures used for this evaluation. The results section indicates findings obtained through both quantitative and qualitative data analyses. Finally, the conclusions section summarises findings, outlines some of the study's limitations and suggests recommendations for subsequent PST programs at Joliette.

## METHOD

### Evaluation Framework

The methodology outlined by Eljdupovic-Guzina and Blanchette (1997) was applied to evaluations of the peer support program at all regional women's facilities, including the current evaluation at Joliette Institution. The framework encompasses three levels of evaluation (basic, moderate, and comprehensive). The comprehensive option was selected for both the pilot study at EIFW and the subsequent investigations at the regional facilities for various reasons. First, it provides the most thorough, in-depth evaluation of the peer support program. The comprehensive option investigates perspectives of *all* parties at the institution (PST members, other offenders, and staff). Everyone at the institution is given an opportunity to contribute to the evaluation by expressing personal insights and feelings about the program.

Second, a comprehensive evaluation also incorporates a variety of multi-method assessment strategies. These techniques include: documentation, file review, surveys, face-to-face interviews with offenders and staff, and measures of self-esteem, group dynamics, and offenders' perception of their correctional environment.

The comprehensive evaluation approach proved beneficial for the pilot study at EIFW and, as such, it was felt that it would be ideal for the PST evaluation at Joliette. Any modifications to the framework that were suggested in the pilot study at EIFW were noted and implemented in the present evaluation report.

### Instruments

#### *Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale*

Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale (Appendix A) is a ten item self-report measure used to assess personal perceptions of self-worth (Rosenberg, 1965). The scale is a global measure of self-esteem that is predictive of behaviour across a range of situations (O'Brien, 1985). Each item on the scale is rated on a four-point Likert scale with ratings ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale was administered twice, both pre and post program implementation. This

provided for an overview of the self-esteem of offenders before and after implementation of the PST program.

### *Sociometric Tests*

Sociometric tests are used to assess personal and group dynamics of a population (Northway & Weld, 1957). A sociogram, created with the results of a sociometric test, provides a graphic representation of the personal and group dynamics of the population tested. The sociometric test for this evaluation assessed the social dynamics at Joliette institution (Appendix B). All responses indicated on the Sociometric test, up to a maximum of three responses, were illustrated in a sociogram (see Results section). In cases where respondents indicated more than three names, the first three were included in the sociogram. The sociogram presents group structure, popularity of particular individuals (e.g. PST members), presence of 'cliques', and/or interactions among PST members and staff. Offenders were asked to complete the sociometric test both pre- and post-program implementation to allow for monitoring of changes in group structure.

### *The Correctional Environment Status Inventory*

The Correctional Environment Status Inventory (CESI; Wolfus & Stasiak, 1996; see Appendix C) measures an offender's perceptions of the quality of their environment, the correctional facility in which they are incarcerated. The measure includes six scales, identified through factor analysis: 1) Offender Relationships, 2) Staff Involvement, 3) Staff Treatment Focus, 4) Clarity and Organization, 5) Staff Cohesion, and 6) Offender Treatment Orientation. Four of the six scales contain subscales. There are three subscales in the Offender Relationships scale: Mutual Caring, Peer Support, and Absence of Hostility. Responsiveness, Caring, and Interest in Offenders are three subcales in the Staff Involvement scale. There are two subscales in the Staff Treatment Focus scale: Encouragement and Open Communication. Finally, the Offender Treatment Orientation scale includes two subscales: Problem Solving and Change Orientation. (Please see Appendix D for a list of items in scales and subscales of the CESI).

The CESI was administered both pre and post program implementation to allow for the measurement of perceived changes in the correctional environment as a function of the Peer Support program.

***Staff and Inmate Surveys***

Both staff and offender surveys (Appendix E) assessed awareness of the PST program at Joliette as well as perceptions of the role and function of the program.

***Staff and Inmate Interviews***

Staff and offender interviews served as an essential source of data in this evaluation (Appendix F). Semi-structured interviews provided respondents with an opportunity to confidentially express personal views, feelings, and ideas about the PST.

**Procedure**

In early 1998, before the training of the first set of PST members at Joliette had been completed, the program Coordinator assisted in the data collection by distributing copies of the pre-tests: 30 each of the Sociometric test, Rosenberg's self-esteem scale, and the Correctional Environment Status Inventory. The tests were distributed to all inmates at the institution who were willing to complete them. As the Sociometric test required respondents to identify themselves while the other measures did not, respondents were provided with an envelope in which they could place completed measures to ensure their confidentiality.

The PST training at Joliette began with selection of PST candidates in August 1997 and their graduation took place in May 1998. The program was fully operational at Joliette after May 1998. The post measures including: 40 each of the Sociometric test, Rosenberg's self-esteem scale, the Correctional Environment Status Inventory, offender and staff surveys were forwarded to the PST Coordinator once the program was implemented at the institution. The post-tests were completed in July of 1998. The last page of the staff and offender survey requested volunteers to participate in an in-depth interview discussing their views of the PST.

Eleven inmates and eight staff members who responded to the survey indicated they were willing to participate in an interview (48%). To increase this sample size, inmates and staff were recruited to participate in interviews when the investigators arrived at Joliette Institution. Investigators also distributed additional post-tests (CESI, Rosenberg's Self Esteem Inventory, Sociometric test, and staff and inmate surveys) while conducting interviews at the institution. In addition, a criminology student from the University of Montreal who was completing a work placement at Joliette Institution continued data collection (interviews and distribution of post-tests) for approximately one month after investigators left the Institution. This proved beneficial in further increasing sample sizes.

The initial framework for evaluation of the PST outlines a semi-structured interview with the program Coordinator, staff, team members and PST recipients (Eljdupovic-Guzina & Blanchette, 1997). The pilot study expanded this framework by including interviews with non-recipients of PST. The evaluations at Joliette, GVI, and Nova Institutions for Women, further expanded the original framework to include interview protocols for all inmates (PST members, PST trainees, recipients of PST, non-recipients of PST, those who were not aware of the PST program, and those who were interested in becoming a team member but were denied training). It was believed that all inmates had valuable insights into the program. For instance, non-recipient could provide insights into why they did not use the PST service.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in private locations at Joliette Institution and all inmates signed informed consent forms prior to their participation.

**Sample**

There were differential rates of completion of the various evaluation measures. Some inmates responded to all tests and participated in an interview while others responded to one or more of the tests (survey, self-esteem measure, sociometric test, CESI). Other inmates participated in the interview only. Similarly, some staff members completed a survey and participated in an interview, while others responded to only one measure.

There were approximately 56 women incarcerated at Joliette Institution at the time of data collection. The population included three (of the original six) PST members from the first peer support team at Joliette. Three members of the team (former members) had been released into the community prior to investigators' arrival at Joliette. At the time of data collection, all inmates at the facility were serving sentences of a minimum of two years and were rated at 'minimum' or 'medium' security levels.

Thirty-one inmate surveys were completed. Nineteen inmates responded to the pre-test, whereas 28 responded to the post-test of the self-esteem scale. Fifteen pre and 14 post sociometric tests were completed and 20 pre and 31 post-tests of the Correctional Environment Status Inventory were completed. Eighteen staff members completed surveys. Respondents came from a variety of professions (primary workers, team leader, teacher, psychologist and others).

In total, we conducted 29 inmate interviews, including: 3 PST members, 7 peer support recipients, 15 non-recipients, and 4 inmates who were not familiar with the PST program. Semi -structured interview protocols for offenders provided general guidelines for interviews. In cases where two interview protocols applied to an inmate, for example, if PST members had been recipients of peer support, both interview protocols (for team members and recipients) were applied to the respondent.

Staff interview respondents came from a variety of professions within Joliette Institution. A total of 19 employees were interviewed, including: deputy warden (1), psychologist (1), PST Coordinator (1), PST Co-coordinator (1), chaplain (1), clerk (1), program coordinator (1), teacher (1), food services staff (1), visit and correspondence staff (1), team leader (1), team leader's assistant (1), parole officer (1), and primary worker (6). The variety of professions represented in the sample was beneficial in accounting for a range of employee perspectives regarding the PST program.

Contrary to the requirement to only staff women at EIFW, male staff were included in the sample for the PST evaluation at Joliette Institution.

## RESULTS

### *Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale*

Prior to the implementation of the PST program (pre), 19 inmates completed the self-esteem test ; 28 inmates completed this test after program implementation (post). Names of respondents were excluded from tests in order to maintain confidentiality. As such, it was impossible to determine whether the same inmate had completed the pre test and the post test. As the post-tests (Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale and CESI) were appended to the offender survey, it was possible to determine that two of the respondents of the post-tests were PST members.

Items on the scale were scored on a range of 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). Items (2, 5, 6, 8, and 9) were reverse scored so that "strongly agree" was given a score of 4, and "strongly disagree" was given a score of 1. High self-esteem was indicated by high scores on each item on the scale.

It was impossible to perform analyses assessing possible differences between PST members' and non-members as only two of the respondents of the self-esteem measure were PST members. Data for the two PST members were therefore included with non-members' data.

Scores on the pre self-esteem scale ranged from 10 to 27. Scores on the post self-esteem scale ranged from 10 to 35. The two team members who responded to the post test fell into this range with scores of 11 and 12.

The average total pre score for the participants in this sample was 15.25 (SD = 4.1) and the average total post score was 16.14 (SD = 5.84). There was no significant difference between the pre and post scores on the test indicating that respondents' self esteem remained stable before and after implementation of the PST program.

***Sociometric Test***

The pilot study cautioned that informing respondents that the Sociometric test was a measure for evaluating the PST program may create a 'priming' effect for respondents causing them to refer to PST members in their responses (Blanchette & Eljdupovic-Guzina, 1998). In order to prevent such an effect, respondents were not informed that the test was related to the study.

Fifteen inmates (27% of the offender population): four future PST members and 11 non-members responded to the (pre) sociometric test before the implementation of the PST program at Joliette Institution. Fourteen inmates (25% of the offender population): three PST members, three former PST members, and eight non-members responded to the (post) sociometric test after implementation of the PST program. The former PST members had been released from the institution before investigators arrived at Joliette Institution to conduct interviews. All future team members included in the pre sociogram were numbered (1 to 6). Each future team member's number in the pre sociogram was maintained as an identifier in the post sociogram (once future team members had completed training and become team members). Identifying team members by numbering them allowed for comparison between the pre and post sociograms. Results of the pre sociometric test are illustrated in the sociogram (Figure 1) on the following page.

Some respondents identified non-respondents or staff as chosen companions in the pre sociometric test. Therefore, the pictorial representation in Figure 1 includes staff and 32 inmates. It was considered important to include all PST members in the chart regardless of whether or not they responded to the sociometric test or were indicated as chosen companions by other inmates. Three of the six future team members responded to the pre sociometric test.

Some interesting findings of the pre sociogram (Figure 1) were noted. First, half of the future team members (3 out of 6) were indicated by other inmates as chosen companions. One team member (#3) was indicated as a chosen companion by one other inmate while the other team member (#4), was indicated as a chosen

companion by two inmates. The third team member (#2) was identified as a preferred companion by three inmates. It is important to note that some non-members were also chosen companions. One non-member was chosen preferred companion by two other inmates, while another non-member was chosen by three other inmates.

Two reciprocal relationships between a non-member and a PST member (#2 and #4) were indicated. Finally, four inmates, including one PST member, indicated that they chose to spend their free time with staff. There was no interaction indicated between future PST members.

Results of the post sociometric test are illustrated in the sociogram in Figure 2. As with the pre sociogram, some respondents identified non-respondents or staff as preferred companions. As such, the pictorial representation in Figure 2 includes staff and 44 inmates.

Two of three former PST members and two of three current PST members responded to the sociometric test. All PST members and former PST members are included in the sociogram because they either completed the sociometric test, were identified as preferred companions for other inmates, or both.

Some interesting findings of the post sociogram are noted from Figure 2. First, all but one of the PST members and former PST members (#6) were identified as preferred companions by other inmates. It is possible that respondents of the post sociometric test were not familiar with this former member (#6) as she had been released from the institution before they got a chance to meet her. It is important to note that one of the former team members (#6) identified another former team member (#5) as a chosen companion. This suggests that this team member understood that her role as caregiver did not exclude her from relying on another team member for support.

The three former PST members were generally indicated as chosen companions. One former team member (#5) was chosen by another former team member. A second former team member (#4) was chosen by two non-members. The third former team member (# 6) was not chosen by other offenders in the sociometric test.

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**Figure 1: Pre Sociogram: Joliette Institution for Women**

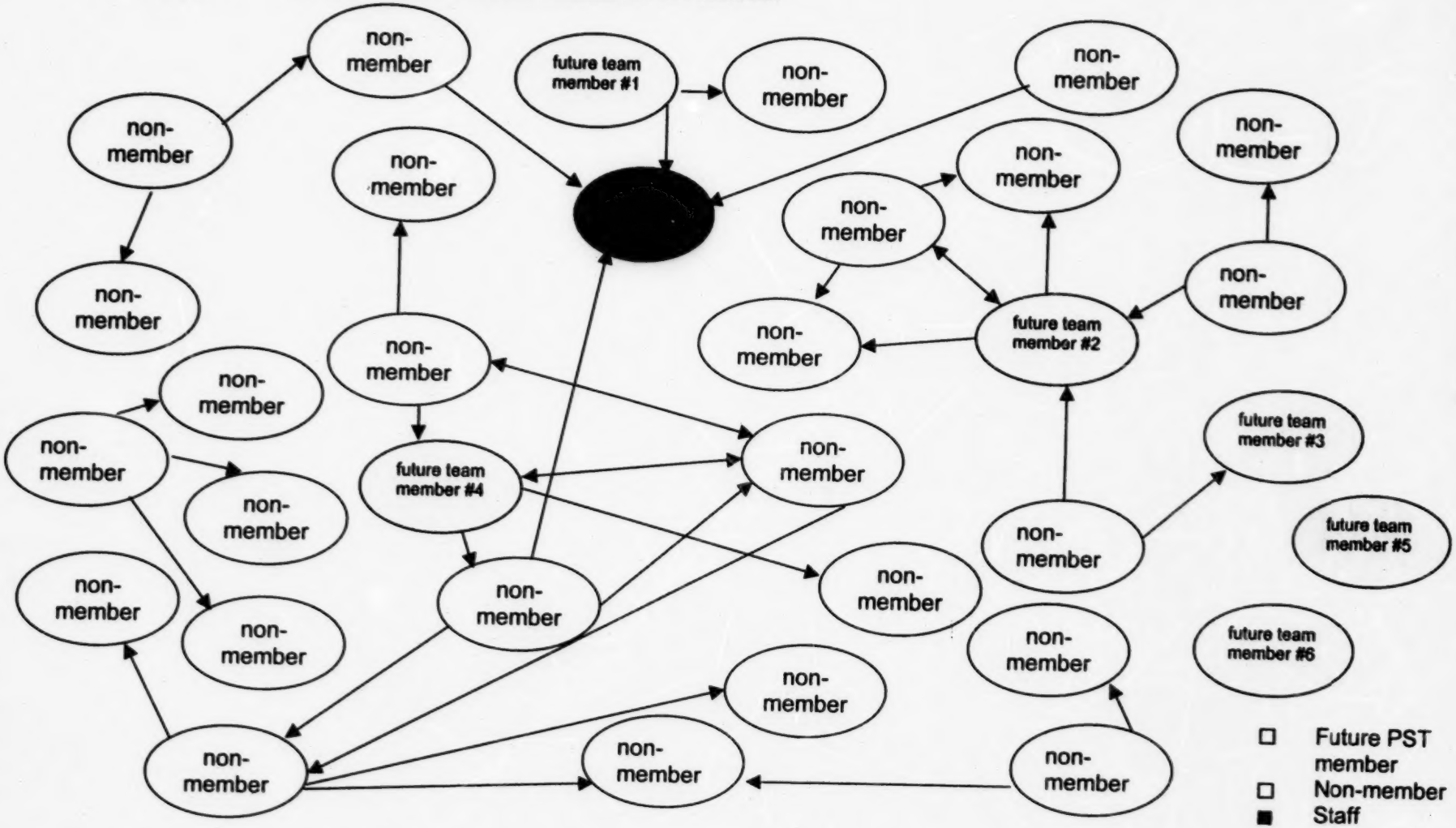
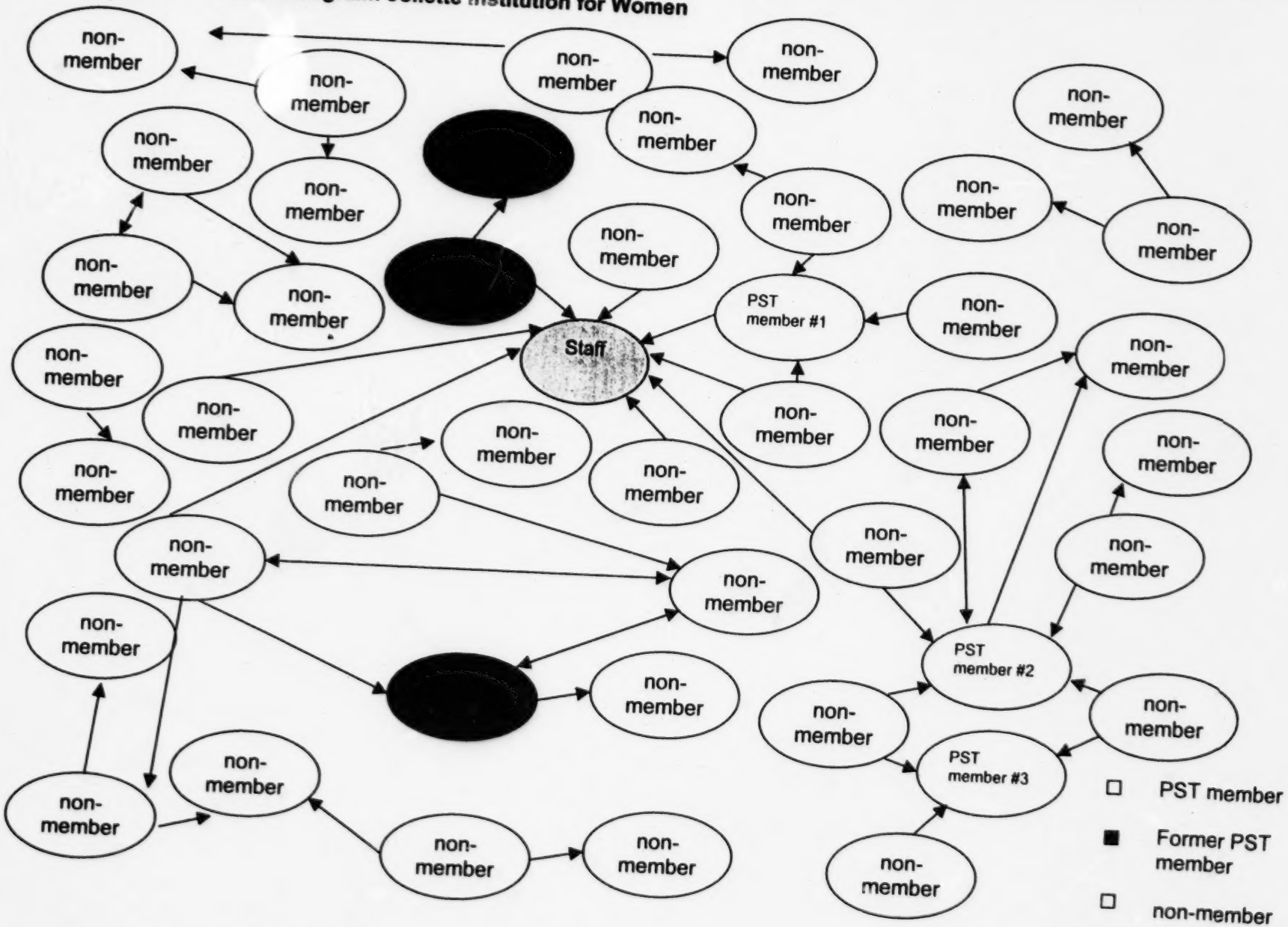

non-member
future team member #1
non-member
non-member
non-member

**Figure 2: Post Sociogram: Joliette Institution for Women**



Current PST members were indicated as preferred companions for other inmates to a greater extent than former team members. Two current PST members (#1 and #3) were indicated by three non-members. The other PST member (#2) was indicated by five non-members. This is not surprising since current PST members, unlike former PST members still had an active role at the facility and the ability to meet and provide service to new admissions to the institution.

Three reciprocal relationships are indicated on the post sociogram. One is between a former PST member (#4) and a non-member. The second is between a PST member (#2) and a non-member and the third is between two non-members. Many inmates (8), including one PST member and one former PST member, indicated that they preferred to spend their free time with staff members. Finally, the only interaction indicated between PST members was one-way between two former PST members (#5 and #6).

A comparison between the pre and post-sociograms indicates that more inmates chose PST members as companions after implementation of the PST program than before its implementation. In the post-sociogram, team members were indicated as chosen companions by other inmates the same amount or more times than in the pre sociogram, before they became team members. Non-members were often identified as preferred companions in the pre-sociogram. This, however, was not the case in the post sociogram. Results of the post-sociogram suggest that PST members were most often selected as Friends/Companions at the institution after program implementation. All former and current PST members except one former member (#6) selected as preferred companions in the post-sociogram.

The pre and post sociograms indicated that a lot of inmates turned to staff for moral support. Also, twice the number of inmates indicated they preferred to spend time with staff after implementation of the PST program than before its implementation. This finding is promising as the regional facilities were designed to reflect a 'community living' model where primary workers are supportive (rather than punitive) towards inmates.

There did not seem to be a lot of interaction between the PST members pre *or* post program implementation. In fact, few reciprocal relationships among the general offender population were indicated in both pre *and* post sociograms.

It is important to note that the results of the pre and post sociograms must be interpreted with some caution in that a social desirability confound might have influenced results of the sociometric tests. The social desirability confound occurs when study participants respond to a test in a manner that they feel will please the researchers.

***Correctional Environment Status Inventory***

The CESI was administered both pre and post PST program implementation. Twenty inmates completed the pre CESI while 31 completed the post CESI. (Sample sizes vary by scale and subscale as a few respondents were missing data for some items).

Items: 1, 3, 8, 19, 25, 48, 56, 60, 61, and 64 of the CESI were reverse-scored before subscale scores were calculated. After reverse scoring, higher scores on all items, scales, and subscales indicated more positive perceptions of the correctional environment than lower scores.

Table 1 contains pre and post mean scores for all scales and subscales. Higher scores indicate more positive perceptions of the correctional environment than lower scores. For consistency, the subscales, 'hostility' and 'disinterest' (see Appendix E), were therefore renamed 'absence of hostility' and 'interest'.

No significant differences were found between pre and post scores for any scales or subscales listed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Mean CESI Scale and Subscale Scores: Distribution by Pre and Post**

| Scale/ Subscale | Pre (n = 20) | Post (n = 23) |
|---|---|---|
| Offender Relationships | 3.2 | 3.0 |
| Mutual Caring | 3.5 | 3.2 |
| Peer Support | 2.8 | 2.7 |
| Absence of Hostility | 3.2 | 3.0 |
| Staff Involvement | 3.2 | 3.3 |
| Responsive | 2.9 | 3.0 |
| Caring | 3.4 | 3.5 |
| Interest | 3.3 | 3.6 |
| Staff Treatment Focus | 3.5 | 3.2 |
| Encouragement | 3.6 | 3.5 |
| Open Communication | 3.4 | 2.9 |
| Clarity & Organization | 4.0 | 3.9 |
| Staff Cohesion | 3.6 | 3.6 |
| Offender Treatment Orientation | 4.2 | 4.0 |
| Problem Solving | 4.3 | 4.2 |
| Change Orientation | 3.7 | 3.6 |

***Inmate Surveys***

Thirty-one inmates responded to the survey (two PST members and 29 non-members). The average age of respondents was 35.1 years old (SD=11.3; range=21 to 62). Sentence lengths of survey respondents ranged from 2 years to life with an average of 4.7 years for determinate sentences. They had served an average of 4.6 years incarcerated, with a range of approximately two months to 20 years. The mean time served at Joliette averaged approximately 13.3 months (range=2 months to 2.5 years).

The majority of women (82%; 23 of 28) were aware that the PST program existed and of the possibility that they could receive support counseling from their peers. A number of analyses within the survey assumed prior knowledge of the PST program. It was therefore necessary to omit the five offenders who were not aware of the PST program from these analyses.

Inmates at Joliette Institution learned about the PST service from a variety of sources: posted notices (9), co-inmates (9), PST members (7), and other means (4). The 'other' means mentioned included learning about the PST service from different staff members. Many respondents indicated they learned about the PST service in more than one of the ways mentioned above.

Most of the women (83%) who were aware of the PST service knew who the PST members were. Furthermore, half of the women who were aware of peer counseling knew how to request it. More than half of the inmates who knew about the PST service indicated that they had never requested peer support (57%). Ten respondents indicated they had used the PST service at least once. Those who had used it, claimed they used the service anywhere from once (2), twice to five times (3), to more than five times (2) Three persons did not indicate frequency of use.

Peer support can be provided to a recipient either formally or informally. Formal peer support occurs when an inmate requests a peer support session from either a staff member or a team member and a session is formally scheduled. Informal peer support occurs when a peer support recipient approaches a team member for counseling or a team member approaches an inmate in need of counseling. This counseling occurs without scheduling of a formal peer support session. Of the 10 respondents who reported receiving peer support at least once, 7 reported receiving formal counseling only, and 2 reported receiving both formal and informal counseling. One recipient did not specify the type of counseling she received.

Out of the total number of survey respondents, 5 were not aware that the PST program existed. In addition, 57% of inmates that were aware of the program had never used it. Of the 23 respondents who were aware of the peer support service, the most common explanation for not using it was not feeling the need for peer support (57%). Other inmates did not use the service because they were concerned that what they said to a PST member would not be kept confidential (22%). Some of the women did not request counseling because they did not feel comfortable with any of the PST members (13%) or were concerned about what other people would think about them using the service (4%). Four respondents (17%) indicated that they would

be more comfortable requesting peer support if they were acquainted with the team members. Two women (9%) reported not using the service because they were PST members. This finding suggests there may be a need to explain to PST members that caregivers can also be recipients of care and that it is both normal and healthy for PST members to request occasional support from their peers. Many respondents indicated more than one of the reasons above for not using the service.

The recipients of peer support cited different reasons for using the service (Table 2). Many respondents indicated more than one of the reasons above for using the service.

**Table 2: Reasons for Requesting Peer Counseling**

| Reasons for Requesting Peer Support | % of Inmates who Indicated Reason |
|---|---|
| Upset/Angry | 13 |
| Lonely | 13 |
| Self-Injurious | 13 |
| Suicidal | 13 |
| Psychologist was not available | 9 |
| Argument with another inmate | 9 |
| Argument with staff | 0 |
| Other | 13 |

The ten recipients of PST reported that they found it very helpful. On a scale from 1 (not helpful at all) to 10 (extremely helpful), scores ranged from 7 to 10, with an average score of 8.8 (SD=1.2). Respondents were provided with an open-ended, short answer question that gave them an opportunity to explain how the PST did or did not meet their expectations. All peer support recipients indicated that their expectations about the PST experience were met. Respondents offered numerous positive reactions to their experiences with PST. The open-ended responses included: "Someone listened like I needed them to", "I got good advice and I did not feel judged", "I felt less alone and got good advice", "I was comfortable to talk about things that were bothering me and not feel judged", and "I find it's good that we can talk to someone all the time." Two survey respondents mentioned that the PST member listened to them attentively and gave good advice.

Peer support recipients indicated that they were satisfied with the promptness of the service. On a scale of 1 (not at all satisfied) to 10 (entirely satisfied), recipients of PST indicated ratings ranging from 6 to 10 with an average rating of 8.6 (SD=1.5).

Three of the ten recipients of peer support reported that they had been excused from other duties to receive peer counseling. It is important to keep in mind that in some cases it may not have been necessary for the peer support recipient to be excused from other duties to receive counseling. For example, if the recipient was in segregation and was not engaged in other duties she would not have to be excused to receive peer support.

Six survey respondents reported that the atmosphere at Joliette had changed as a result of the PST program. Four of these respondents reported a positive change in atmosphere at the institution and two respondents reported 'other' changes they did not specify.

Six inmates reported that the PST was used for alternative purposes. Two of them specified they thought the PST was used as a means for members to chat with friends. This may require monitoring in the future.

In summary, results of the inmate survey suggest the women incarcerated at Joliette are generally supportive of the PST program. Despite this, however, more than half of the respondents (57%) who were aware of the PST program had never received peer counseling. Those who had received peer counseling were quite satisfied with their experiences. Although many inmates were aware the PST program existed, some did not know who the PST members were or did not know how to request counseling. The PST program does not seem to have had much of an effect on the atmosphere at Joliette Institution.

***Staff Survey***

Eighteen employees responded to the staff survey, including primary workers (6), the program coordinator (1), team leader (1), psychologist (1), food services staff (1), teacher (1), assistant team leader (1), deputy warden (1) and staff who's position was unknown (5). The respondents' average length of service in their current position at

Joliette was 20 months (SD=0.75; range = 5 months to 3 years). The average length of time they had worked with women offenders was 2.3 years (SD=1.2; range = 1 year to 5 years).

All staff respondents were aware of the PST program. They reported obtaining information about the PST program in a variety of ways including: the psychologist telling them (18), reading posted notices (8), or other ways (15). The "other ways" included hearing other staff members or team members talk about PST or reading about PST via email. The majority of staff respondents reported that they could identify the PST members (72%) and that they knew how to proceed if they received a request for peer support (61%).

When asked about the effectiveness of peer support in influencing individual offender's crises and institutional crises on a scale of 1 (not helpful at all) to 10 (very helpful), respondents indicated mean scores of 7.7 (SD=1.4) and 6.3 (SD=1.8) respectively, with ranges of 5 to 10 and 3.5 to 10, respectively.

Six respondents (33%) indicated that there was a change in atmosphere at the institution since the implementation of the PST program. Four of the six respondents specified that there was a environmental positive change. They felt that there was less tension in the atmosphere at Joliette and that inmates relied on each other more than staff since PST program implementation. They also indicated that inmates became more open in general and discussed issues more freely.

Staff indicated the level of trust they had for PST members on a scale of 1 (no trust) to 10 (complete trust), with scores ranging from 3 to 10 and a mean of 6.7 (SD=1.7). All but two respondents (89%) agreed that their level of trust varied for different team members.

The majority (78%) of the staff survey respondents reported that PST members had changed since their admission to the PST program. All respondents who specified what kinds of changes they had noticed in PST members indicated that they had changed positively since their admission to the program. The most commonly cited change was an increase in responsibility and accountability for their actions followed by higher self-esteem.

In an assessment of whether or not the PST program reinforces the effects of other institutional interventions on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 10 (a great deal), staff responded with a mean of 6.2 (SD=1) for PST members and a mean of 4.2 (SD=1.6) for non-members.

Staff members reported that peer support had never created a crisis greater than the original one. Half of the respondents (9) reported that PST had been used for alternative purposes. They reported that it was used for visiting or used in other inappropriate ways not specified.

An overview of the results of the staff survey suggests that staff members from a variety of positions at Joliette are aware of the PST program and view the program favourably. Respondents indicate that the atmosphere at Joliette has changed positively since the implementation of the PST program and the PST members themselves have also changed positively. Similar to the results of the inmate survey, results of the staff survey give some indication that the PST is viewed as being used for alternative purposes such as visiting.

***Staff and Inmate Interviews***

Nineteen staff interviews were conducted at Joliette Institution with the program coordinator (1), program co-coordinator (1), deputy warden (1), psychologist (1), chaplain (1), teacher (1), programs staff (1), parole officer (1), primary workers (6), team leader (1), assistant team leader (1), and clerical and service staff (3). Twenty-nine inmate interviews were conducted with 3 team members, 7 peer support recipients, 15 non-recipients and 4 offenders who were unaware of the PST program. Both staff and inmate interviews were significant sources of information for the PST program as they provided important information in answering the evaluation questions outlined in the framework (Eljdupovic-Guzina & Blanchette, 1997, p.47-50). The interviews provided the entire population of staff and inmates with an opportunity to openly express their views about the PST program. Interviews also provided information that clarified and elaborated on the results of other measures used in the study (self-esteem scale, sociogram, CESI, staff/offender surveys).

Results of the staff and offender interviews will be summarized according to the evaluation questions and issues outlined in the framework (Eljdupovic-Guzina & Blanchette, 1997). There are five major evaluation questions. Each major evaluation issue precedes three specific evaluation questions.

## *Evaluation Issues and Questions*

### 1. Program Rationale: Is there a need for the program?

#### 1.1. Are the program's activities and outputs linked to achieving its effects in a valid and logical way?

In the pilot study of the peer support program at EIFW, Blanchette and Eljdupovic-Guzina (1998) noted that PST related activities appeared both valid and logical to the achievement of the program's goals. They also indicated that in evaluating the PST program, it is important to link the program's activities to its intended effects. In doing so we must assess both the immediate and long term impacts of the program. The program logic model (Eljdupovic-Guzina & Blanchette, 1997, p.23) indicates a number of products related to the PST program. Immediate products include effects of formal and informal counseling or crisis intervention. The long term effects include efficient management of the facility and empowerment for the women engaged in the program. The two primary goals of the PST program revealed from interviews at Joliette were (1) support for women in times of crisis, and (2) development of the capacity in women to seek out resources in times of need or crisis.

#### 1.2. Does the program have its own place and function at the facility?

As indicated in the Mental Health Strategy for Women Offenders, the PST has a place on the Women's Mental Health Continuum of Care (Laishes, 1997). The peer support program focuses on key principles in this continuum such as access, women-centredness, and client participation.

The interviewees reflect a recognition of the uniqueness and utility of the PST program. As one offender described, "There are a lot of women here who have been abused, battered and take drugs to try and forget about it. Some women never

receive visitors and others want to hurt themselves or commit suicide in times when they are depressed. Peer support is useful for these women."

The majority of staff and inmates interviewed were aware of the PST service at Joliette Institution. Only four of the 29 inmates interviewed were not aware of the PST. A few inmates suggested that information about the PST program should be better communicated to offenders upon their arrival at Joliette. They believed peer support would be very helpful to inmates in adjusting to a new environment when they first came to the institution.

Some staff members and inmates indicated that the role of the PST program within the institution needs to be better defined. A Standing Order (SO) for an institutional program represents formal management support for the program. The PST program at Joliette Institution does not currently have a SO. Since there is no SO, policies and guidelines for the functioning of the program are somewhat ambiguous. Interview results indicate that there is no clear consensus how to proceed if an inmate requests peer support. As a result, some staff feel that certain team members are taking advantage of their position and providing counseling when it is not necessary. A SO would help formalize procedures for functioning of the program and remedy such problems. Interview results also indicated that there was no formal space to run the PST training at the institution and that it would be beneficial to the trainees if such a place was designated. A SO could resolve this issue as well.

### 1.3. Does the PST program serve the targeted population?

Results of surveys and interviews indicate the PST program at Joliette Institution serves the targeted population. Almost half of the inmates surveyed who were aware of the PST program (43%) had used the service on at least one occasion. Interview results indicate that approximately one third of inmates interviewed had received peer counseling on at least one occasion and were generally satisfied by it.

As mentioned earlier, there were three members on the PST at Joliette at the time of data collection. The amount of counseling each of the three members provided varied significantly. It was estimated that the most active team member provided

approximately ten counseling sessions per week whereas the least active team member provided less than one counseling session per month. This variability in rates of counseling could be due to a variety of reasons. First, inmates have a choice of team members from whom they might receive counseling. Perhaps one team member was preferred over the other team members. There may also be situations where particular inmates who request peer support on a regular basis, prefer to meet with one of the team members rather than others. Further, for reasons of personal health or emotional issues, team members may refuse to provide counseling when it is requested. Consequently, some team members may refuse to counsel more often than others. Finally, some team members may actively approach inmates who they think need peer support and, may therefore, have more contact with inmates than team members who do not actively seek out potential peer support recipients.

It seems that the team member who estimated she provided counseling approximately ten times a week, was serving the population at Joliette on a regular basis. In comparison, the team member who estimated she provided counseling less than once a month was rarely serving inmates at the institution. It is important to note that there were only 3 PST members and 56 inmates at Joliette Institution when data were collected for this evaluation. The ratio of team members in comparison to the offender population (3:56) limits the ability of the team members to serve the targeted population. It also seems that one member (the one who provides peer support approximately ten times per week) is the principal source of counseling at Joliette. Having more team members (and more active team members) would likely enhance the situation at Joliette Institution whereby the peer support service could be more accessible to inmates in need.

Staff interview results indicate that staff members tend to underestimate the amount the PST service is used compared to the amount that inmates claim that it is used. This may be explained by the fact that peer support consists of both formal and informal counseling. As inmates do not always want to request peer support formally through staff, they may choose to receive informal peer counseling. In this way staff are unaware of the extent to which peer support counseling is occurring at the facility.

Results of the inmate interviews reveal a variety of reasons recipients used the peer support service. Some of these included dealing with conflict with other inmates, dealing with personal/family issues, feeling discouraged, feeling suicidal, and venting emotions. Some of the team members at Joliette indicated that PST use tended to increase at certain times of year such as during holidays and after family visits.

The PST program serves its targeted population by providing inmates with a resource other than staff with whom to discuss personal issues. Some oinmates indicated that they did not feel comfortable discussing personal issues with staff. Interview results indicate different reasons for this discomfort. First, some inmates have a lack of trust for staff and a fear that anything they reveal to staff may be documented in some way (i.e., put in their file). One staff member said, "It's best for inmates to talk to other inmates. With their peers they can say, 'I took drugs,' and they don't have to worry about it going on their file somewhere." Also, some inmates relayed that they cannot relate to staff members as they have not had similar experiences to offenders. Some inmates reported they did not feel staff had a right to be aware of an offender's personal issues. Others indicated that they do not wish to talk to staff who are younger than them. Finally, some inmates reported feeling that they would be judged by staff if they revealed personal information to them. They did not feel that they would be judged in this way by fellow inmates. Some inmates indicated they felt more comfortable talking to someone who was "at the same level" as them. One team member noted that it is important for the inmates to talk to someone who is "not in the system."

Several staff members indicated that they supported inmates having an alternative to staff with whom to talk about personal issues. They indicated a number of reasons why the PST benefits staff as well as inmates. First, some inmates indicated that staff try to help inmates deal with personal issues, however they have not shared the same experiences as offenders and therefore, cannot relate to them in the same manner as other inmates. A staff member explained, "I don't have enough in common with the offenders to relate to them. It would not be right for me to assume that I can."

Second, PST members can help staff deal with an inmate who is in crisis and does not wish to communicate with staff. The PST can also be preventative in stopping crises before they escalate. Third, staff members indicated that the PST helps bridge the communication gap between staff and inmates. The PST can act as 'go-betweens' between the staff and inmates.

Finally, according to interview results, peer support lessens the workload of staff members. For example, PST members can help inmates deal with minor daily problems that the psychologist would otherwise have to deal with. PST members can also provide inmates with someone to talk to when certain staff are off duty. Some respondents and staff explained that team members have more time to talk to inmates than staff do.

Peer support is an important resource for inmates who are placed in segregation. In the general population, inmates have access to a support network (including team members) from which they can receive informal peer support at any time. Inmates placed in segregation no longer have informal access to this network. The peer support service can provide support to inmates in segregation. Some inmates and staff indicated that the availability of formal peer support to inmates in segregation is beneficial as it helps reintegrate the women back into the general offender population and helps prevent potential crises, like suicide attempts.

Interview results also suggest that peer support is useful for inmates with mental health problems. One staff member stated, "The inmates with mental health problems that use peer support are segregated from other women. That's why peer support is so important for them. They're the ones who make formal requests for the service."

Peer support team members benefit from their participation in the peer support program. This was noted by many interviewees. One staff member commented, "The program is actually more advantageous for the women on the PST than for the recipients of peer support services."

It is also important to consider that the PST program is not serving some inmates that wish to become team members as they are currently excluded from the PST training.

Staff members indicated that it is difficult to find bilingual program facilitators in the community. As such, at the time of this evaluation, the facilitation of the PST at Joliette was conducted solely in French. This excluded unilingual English speaking inmates from partaking in the training. As Joliette is a bilingual institution, all team members were required to be bilingual. Unilingual English or French speaking inmates were not eligible to become PST members.

Both inmates and staff indicated that PST sessions proved beneficial for inmates in a variety of ways. These included receiving comforting support, allowing them to vent and providing them with advice and encouragement. The PST provides inmates with someone at their 'level' that will listen to them.

## 2. Are there adequate resources and support for establishing the PST program?

### 2.1. Does the Coordinator have sufficient time, acknowledgment and support for activities regarding the program?

At the time of data collection, the PST program at Joliette Institution was facilitated by a Coordinator and a Co-coordinator. Since then, the Co-coordinator has left the institution. The PST Coordinator has the position of Programs Coordinator at Joliette Institution. Both the Coordinator and Co-coordinator indicated that facilitating the PST program was an important part of their duties at the institution. They also indicated that they received sufficient acknowledgement and support from institutional management for their contribution to the PST program. Joliette Institution acknowledges the PST program as equal in importance to other programs at the institution (like the Cognitive Skills program and the Substance Abuse program).

The Coordinators indicated that they had sufficient time to facilitate the program. If they spent any time beyond their required work hours (e.g. weekends) on peer support related activities, they were permitted to take the equivalent amount of time off at a later date.

The team members rated whether they were satisfied with the availability of the Coordinators to have consultations with them when needed on a scale of 1 (not at all

satisfied) to 10 (very satisfied). The team members were satisfied with the Coordinators availability and gave an average rating of 8.7 (range = 7 to 10). The Coordinators also indicated that they had a good relationship with team members with an average score of 9.5 (range = 9 to 10) on a scale of 1 (poor relationship) to 10 (very good relationship).

Interview results indicated that there is sufficient monetary support for the PST program at Joliette Institution. According to the Coordinators, the program requires very little funding. Expenses for the program include supplying trainees with manuals as well as costs associated with the graduation ceremony. Facilitators from the community volunteer their time and are therefore, not paid. Funding for the program comes from the program budget.

The PST at Joliette has an insufficient number of team members to serve the offender population. As mentioned earlier, there are only three team members who should be available to provide service for approximately 56 inmates. The institution would benefit from additional team members to serve the offender population.

Although it was indicated that there was sufficient acknowledgement and monetary support for the PST program, as of summer 1999, there has not been another PST training session since the first one in May 1998. An update from programs staff at the institution in July 1999 indicated a few reasons for this. First, few inmates have shown an interest in participating in the training. In fact, the Coordinator had to actively recruit inmates to participate in the first PST training.[1] Second, the Co-coordinator has left the institution. This decreased staff support in facilitation of the program. Finally, it is difficult to recruit bilingual facilitators from the community in order to train inmates who are interested in participating in the program. Perhaps increased staff support in facilitating the program along with funding to pay for facilitators from the community (rather than asking them to volunteer), would help facilitate a second training session at Joliette Institution.

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[1] It is important to note that only bilingual inmates were considered for training and, thus, some interested inmates may have been denied the opportunity to participate.

In summary, the Coordinators indicated that they had sufficient acknowledgement, time and monetary support for the PST program. The program could, however, benefit from additional PST members.

### 2.2. Is the training of the Team members sufficient?

Before PST training can take place, there is recruitment and screening process for potential team members. The Coordinators for the first (and only) PST training conducted screening. They consulted with an Institutional Preventative Security Officer (IPSO) to ensure there were no security concerns with potential trainees. Three additional screening criteria were used. First, as Joliette is a bilingual institution, trainees had to be bilingual. Second, trainees had to be considered emotionally stable with few institutional concerns. Finally, trainees had to have sentences by which they were unlikely to be released within the next six months. This last criteria was to ensure that trainees would be at Joliette long enough to complete the training (3-4 months) and to use their new skills in providing peer support. The Coordinators and a representative from the Elizabeth Fry Society of Québec[2] conducted interviews with potential team members in order to assess their suitability for participation in the training. Six women were selected for the training. All six trainees later graduated to become team members.

PST training was comprised of 17 sessions over approximately a four month period: one session per week. If a trainee missed more than two training sessions she would not graduate. The training at Joliette Institution was facilitated by the Coordinator, Co-coordinator and volunteer facilitators from the community who served as session speakers. Generally, training followed the outline in the PST manual (CSC, 1996b). Training sessions included open discussion where trainees could express their views and ask questions. Although the training followed the concepts and philosophy of the

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[2] The Elizabeth Fry Society is one of 23 sister agencies across Canada whose mandate is to assist women in conflict with the law.

training manual, volunteer facilitators were allowed flexibility to discuss what they wished within the broad concepts outlined in the manual (CSC, 1996b). Volunteer facilitators from the community were well received by the trainees. They felt that these facilitators represented support from "the outside." Trainees appreciated that community facilitators were unpaid volunteers who took time out of their schedules and sometimes travelled from other cities to participate in the training. One team member mentioned, "We had great people come and talk to us!" Including volunteer facilitators in the training is also beneficial in easing the workload of PST Coordinators.

PST members rated the training as very helpful on a scale of 1 (not helpful at all) to 10 (very helpful). One team member gave a rating of 8 while two team members gave ratings of 10. The team members specified that training was also helpful to them on a personal level. The Coordinators also indicated they were satisfied with the training. They gave scores of 8.5 and 9 on the same rating scale provided to team members.

Staff at Joliette supported training for the PST program. The team members were asked to indicate whether their attendance at the training sessions was supported by staff on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 10 (entirely). All team members gave ratings of 10. In addition to this, all team members agreed to volunteer their own time on evenings and weekends to attend training sessions. As such, training did not conflict with other programs.

As mentioned earlier, the PST training was based on the volunteer manual (CSC, 1996b). The manual provided an outline for the PST training. Team members indicated they liked the manual and found it useful. Some team members indicated that they used the manual for reference on a regular basis. One of the individual indicated that although she found the manual helpful, she found it too "academic" for her to follow. She preferred material presented in lecture format. The Coordinators followed broad concepts outlined in the manual. Information presented, however, varied somewhat from that in the manual. According to the Coordinator, this was

done to accommodate French culture and language. Team members indicated they were satisfied with the training and with the changes to the training.

Following the completion of the PST course there was a graduation for the team members. Coordinators of the PST program, management, volunteer facilitators from the community, and graduating team members attended the graduation. The program budget covered the costs related to graduation. Team members received small gifts from volunteer facilitators from the community. In addition, each team member received a graduation certificate. One team member prepared a meal that was served. The graduation was rated as a successful event by both staff and team members.

Results of staff interviews revealed a few other issues that relate to the PST training. First, it was mentioned that some team members who go through training leave the institution soon after training is complete. This creates a problem of not having a sufficient sized team. Some staff members mentioned that current team members could assist in recruiting and training future team members. This would increase the size of the team and present team members with an opportunity to refresh what they had learned.

In summary, the PST training at Joliette was perceived as satisfactory by the team members and the Coordinators. The team members benefited from the PST training and valued the information they received both during training sessions and in the training manual. The PST graduation was viewed as a successful event.

Team members indicated they benefited personally from the PST training. Perhaps, the PST training could be offered as a program for all inmates rather than solely for training and selection of team members. Results of the pilot study at EIFW suggested the PST training be offered as a program for the general offender population (Blanchette & Eljdupovic-Guzina,1998). Blanchette & Eljdupovic-Guzina recommended inmates be encouraged to participate in training for its intrinsic value rather than for PST membership. Presently, the screening criteria at Joliette Institution is stringent. For example, PST trainees must be bilingual in order to be

accepted for PST training. Inmates that do not pass screening are excluded from benefiting from the PST training.

### 2.3. Is Team members' participation in establishing the program acknowledged and balanced with other duties?

The PST members' participation in PST training and in providing PST counseling was generally acknowledged and balanced with their other duties. In regards to PST training there wasn't a problem in balancing training with other duties because training sessions for the PST generally occurred in the evening outside of regular working hours. All team members demonstrated their dedication to the program through their willingness to participate in training sessions on their own time.

PST trainees were acknowledged for their involvement in PST training. The PST program at the institution is regarded as equivalent to any other correctional program. On rare occasions when training was offered during the regular workday instead of the evening, team members were paid at their regular rate of pay for time they spent in training.

In regards to peer counseling sessions, two out of three PST members indicated that they did not find it difficult to balance peer counseling sessions with other duties. When asked how hard it was for them to combine counseling with their other duties and work on a 10-point scale (1=very hard; 10=very easy), team members gave ratings of 10, 7 and 1. Importantly, the team member who found it difficult to fit peer counseling in with other duties indicated specific personal reasons for this.

Certain strategies are in place at Joliette Institution to help team members fit peer counseling into their schedules. First, if a peer support team member is feeling 'burnt out', she is encouraged to take temporary leave from the team. Second, if the request is not urgent team members sometimes provide counseling sessions after their regular work hours. Finally, the time taken by team members for PST counseling is considered part of regular work hours and pay is not deducted.

The PST members were asked to rate whether they were satisfied with the assistance they receive for fitting counseling in with other duties from 1 (not at all

satisfied) to 10 (very satisfied). Team members gave ratings of 10, 7 and 4. These ratings suggest some disagreement among team members. Although two of the team members gave satisfactory ratings, one did not. This team member (who gave a rating of 4) clarified that the rating applied to some, but not all staff. Interview results further clarified this comment and indicated that the PST program is acknowledged by some but not all staff at Joliette. Results indicated that staff support for the program generally varied by position. In general, different levels of support for the PST were indicated by primary workers, mental health staff and management.

Results indicate that primary workers varied in the degree to which they supported the PST program. Although some primary workers were supportive of the program and aided in the facilitation of peer support counseling sessions, other primary workers were not supportive. Several reasons were provided for this lack of support. First, some primary workers may have been unfamiliar with the program and therefore, seemed unsupportive of it. Some of the staff at Joliette Institution had previously worked in male institutions where this program does not exist. Second, some staff were accused of not taking the program seriously and sometimes refusing a PST session or not helping to facilitate a PST session. An example of such an occasion was provided by team members who indicated staff had instructed that a PST session take place outside during the winter when it was cold. This lack of support from some staff members can cause inmates to feel they are "just numbers to staff." Finally some inmates request PST on a regular basis. Some staff interpret this frequent use of the PST as abuse of the service or using the service for alternative purposes like socializing. These staff members are therefore, unsupportive of helping to facilitate PST sessions.

Interview results indicate that mental health staff are generally more supportive of the PST program than many primary workers. Mental health staff indicated that they recognize the important role of the PST in helping staff deal with offenders' personal issues. They also indicated that they recognize that the PST does not replace the tasks of psychologists but is an important resource nonetheless.

Management staff at Joliette Institution also indicated acknowledgement and support for the PST program. They recognized the PST training as equivalent to other programs at the institution. They also provided team members with time off with pay when they provided PST sessions during regular work hours. Furthermore, they recognized that involvement in the PST program could be beneficial to an offender when being assessed for conditional release.

The difference in acknowledgement and support of the PST service between primary workers, mental health professionals and management could be due to various reasons. First, each of these groups of staff have a different amount of contact with the team members and inmates and play a different role in the facilitation of the PST service. They are therefore likely to have had different experiences with the PST. This may help explain the differences in their level of support for the PST program. Second, there is no procedural outline explaining guidelines for PST sessions. This makes it difficult for staff (like primary workers) to detect when the service is being abused or used for alternative purposes.

The majority of the offender population supports the PST program at Joliette Institution. They indicated that they felt the program benefits everyone at the institution including: peer support recipients, team members, and staff. A few inmates, however, reported little support for the PST program. The major reason for this lack of support was fear of breach of confidentiality by PST members. The issue of breach of confidentiality came up throughout both staff and offender interviews. Some staff and offenders indicated that PST members had breached confidentiality of recipients by revealing information about the support session to the inmate population. According to most staff this happened infrequently, however according to some inmates, this happened on a regular basis. Other staff and inmates were not sure if PST members breached recipients' confidentiality but they suspected this may be the case. One offender complained, "Breaches of trust occur all the time." Some peer support recipients claimed they only trusted one or two of the PST members because they were afraid the others would breach their confidentiality. It seemed that many recipients preferred to receive counseling from one of the three members with whom they had established a trusting relationship.

Another reason for lack of support for the PST from the offender population involved the recruitment process for PST trainees. The Coordinators had to be selective in who they chose to include in training. Consequently, some lack of support for the program was created amongst those who were not considered for training.

In general, the PST program receives both acknowledgement and support from both inmates and staff at Joliette Institution. There are, however some staff members who have shown some resistance to the program. There is also lack of support from some offenders, mainly because they fear that a PST member may breach confidentiality of a peer support recipient.

### 3. Implementation: Are activities of the program organized in a way that its goals can be achieved?

#### 3.1. Is the prison community familiar with the program and its activities?

The majority of inmates and staff at Joliette Institution were familiar with the PST program. Only 18% of inmate survey respondents and 14% of interview respondents were not aware of the peer support service. Many of the respondents who were unaware of the PST had been admitted to the institution shortly before this evaluation was conducted. This may help explain why they were unaware of the PST program. Almost all respondents who were aware of the program knew who the team members were and knew how to proceed if they wished to receive counseling.

However, results indicate that almost half of the inmates interviewed felt there should be more attempts to create awareness about the PST service among the inmate population. Further, they suggested a number of ways in which this information could be distributed to inmates. Information pamphlets about the PST could be placed in inmates' mailboxes. Also, posting information about the PST program throughout the institution (e.g. in the gym and admitting and discharge) and introducing team members to the inmate population through information sessions would be beneficial in communicating the availability of the PST service to inmates. Some inmates emphasized the importance of informing offenders about the PST service as soon as they were admitted into the institution. They felt that the PST service could be useful

in helping newly admitted inmates adjust to their environment and integrate into the offender population.

All staff members surveyed and interviewed at Joliette Institution were aware of the PST program. Some of the staff admitted that although they were aware of the existence of the PST program, they were not aware of the particulars of the PST program such as who the team members were or how to proceed if they received a request for peer counseling.

In summary, although both staff and inmates are aware of the existence of the PST program, they need to be aware of the details of the program in order to maximize its use and effectiveness. Staff should be well informed about the program so that they can communicate accurate information about the PST to inmates. Distributing literature explaining the PST program and holding information sessions regarding peer support for all existing and new staff and inmates at Joliette Institution would also be beneficial.

### 3.2. Is peer counseling meeting the needs of its recipients?

Results of this evaluation indicate that the needs of PST recipients at Joliette Institution are being met. Recipients indicated a number of reasons for using the service including: having problems with family, psychologist not being available, fighting with another inmate, having emotional difficulties. All PST recipients made several positive comments regarding their experience with peer counseling. Recipients indicated that peer support was beneficial to them in several ways including providing them with encouragement, support, useful and pertinent advice, someone to listen to them, and help in resolving conflicts. They also indicated that peer support boosted their self-esteem and presented them with alternate perspectives on issues with which they were dealing. Several recipients indicated that they appreciated being able to talk to someone at the same "level" as them who "understood where they were coming from." One recipient indicated that, "Talking to a PST member prevented me from getting a disciplinary charge." Another recipient indicated that the PST helped "pull her through" when she was feeling suicidal.

Another recipient indicated, "I like the promptness, ambition and respect that team members give to peer support and they don't ask for anything in return."

The majority of staff thought the PST met recipients' needs. A few staff members felt that the PST may not be meeting the needs of recipients as the service is not offered between the hours of 10:00pm and 8:00am. One staff member commented, "Putting a time constraint on peer support is like saying you can only have problems at certain times of day. That's not fair. The women can't plan particular times to be upset." One team member indicated that, at times, she has informally provided peer counseling to other inmates in her house between the hours of 10:00pm and 8:00am. As this was informal counseling and PST counseling is not permitted during these times, she was not compensated with time off the next workday for the time she had spent counseling.

Although all PST recipients at Joliette Institution reported having positive experiences with peer counseling, it is important to acknowledge that a portion of the offender population chose not to request peer counseling. Results of the inmate interviews revealed reasons why inmates might not request PST. First, a popular reason why respondents indicated for not using the service was not feeling a need for it. Another reason several inmates indicated for not using the service was fear that what they said to a PST member would not be kept confidential. One inmate explained, "The biggest disadvantage of the PST is that breaches of confidentiality have a lot of potential to really hurt people." Team members also expressed a concern about confidentiality. They indicated that they did not trust each other and suspected that team members (other than themselves) would breach confidentiality of recipients. Notably, the team members at the institution cannot gain the confidence of potential recipients if they do not trust each other. This may perhaps be an issue for subsequent training to address.

A third obstacle preventing inmates from receiving peer support is one of a language barrier. Few inmates at the institution have difficulty communicating in either English or French. These inmates are not provided with an opportunity to express themselves efficiently in the language they choose during a peer support session. This language

barrier isolates them from the inmate population to some degree. It also prevents them from being able to communicate effectively with all PST members. Finally, a few inmates indicated that they did not approach any of the team members for peer counseling because they were not acquainted with them. They said they would prefer to request peer support from a team member if they had met them previously.

In summary, it seems that generally, the PST *is* meeting the needs of its recipients. PST recipients made several positive comments regarding their experiences with peer counseling. However, some inmates do not receive peer support because they fear their confidentiality will be breached, they have a language barrier with team members or they are not acquainted with them.

### 3.3. Are the coordinator, other staff involved and Team members' consultations providing sufficient support and exchange of information?

The Coordinator's manual for the PST outlines certain mechanisms to promote sufficient support and exchange of information between staff and team members. The manual recommends that an inmate chairperson be appointed (CSC, 1996a). According to the manual this chairperson should be included in the PST steering committee. The inclusion of an inmate chairperson should facilitate consultation and support between PST members and staff. To date no steering committee exists at Joliette Institution and, therefore, no meetings have taken place. The offender chairperson has left the institution and not been replaced. There is, therefore, a lack of communication between team members and staff in this way.

PST members indicated that they used to meet approximately once a week when the PST program first started. After a while, they claim that this became too much for them to fit into their schedules so they stopped meeting. Team members indicated that although the Coordinators were available for consultation with team members if they needed it, the team members did not have regularly scheduled meetings with them. This absence of meetings may be related to the conflict and lack of trust team members reported having for each other.

The team members were asked "Do you feel that you are in charge of the program, or rather, that you are being directed to a great extent by the coordinator and/or other staff?" All three team members interviewed indicated they felt they were in charge of the PST program. One team member said, "I feel we are in charge of the program. The staff are just mediators in the process." Another member indicated, "The inmates are in full control of the program." One team member specified that despite the fact that the team members were in charge of the program, they were not in charge of each other. She claimed that the team members did not feel the need to 'police' each other and guard against things like breach of confidentiality. She explained why she did not feel the need to "police" other team members using an analogy of a basket of apples. "If one of them is rotten, you just don't eat it. That's why some PST members are never requested to provide peer support."

As indicated in the Coordinator's manual (CSC, 1996a), PST members are responsible for keeping records of the peer counseling they provide. This is to collect information on the popularity and utility of the PST service. In order to ensure the confidentiality of support recipients, PST members are only required to report general information such as the name of the PST member, time of counseling, problems discussed, and recommendations offered. Unfortunately, team members do not provide records of peer counseling to the Coordinator on a regular basis. This limits the exchange of information between PST members and the Coordinator.

Some staff members reported concern that team members may withhold important information regarding inmates from them. For example, some staff members reported concern that a team member may withhold serious psychological concerns regarding a recipient from the psychologist. They expressed that this lack of exchange of information between team members and staff may be due to the distrust inmates have for staff. It is also potentially harmful to PST recipients.

Some inmates mentioned the lack of exchange of information between staff and team members, suggesting that staff rather than inmates withhold information and act as a barrier for inmates to receive peer counseling. A few inmates complained that particular staff do not inform inmates about the availability of the PST service or refer

inmates for PST when they should. A team member also complained that some PST sessions are limited to about half an hour by staff because staff feels that is enough time for a PST session. PST sessions may also be cut short if the session runs past 10:00pm. It was also mentioned that, at times, staff designates that PST sessions take place outside without providing team members and recipients with reasoning for this.

Team members and staff indicated that some employees were supportive and accommodating while others did not communicate efficiently with the team members. Perhaps if guidelines are established for the PST program at Joliette Institution it will enhance communication. Guidelines for the program should include things like designated locales for PST sessions and acceptable duration of time for PST sessions. Communication between the team members and between team members and staff also needs consideration. Team members need to meet more regularly to try to address the feelings of mistrust between them and to improve cohesion as a team. They should also meet on a regular basis with the Coordinator in order to facilitate communication between the team members and staff. The Coordinator could, in turn, exchange information regarding the PST program with other staff members.

## 4. Is the program effective?

### 4.1. To what extent does the program help in crisis intervention?

The two primary goals of the PST program at Joliette Institution are (1) to provide support for women in times of crisis and (2) to develop the capacity in women to seek out resources in times of need and crisis. Both staff and inmates indicated that the PST was effective in crisis intervention at Joliette Institution.

PST Coordinators were asked to rate how effective they found the program for dealing with individual inmates' crises on a scale of 1 (not at all helpful) to 10 (very helpful). The Coordinators gave ratings of 10 and 8. Many staff members and inmates interviewed at Joliette Institution agreed that the PST was helpful in crisis intervention for individual inmates. Results of the staff survey indicate that the PST

was rated satisfactorily in its ability to mitigate individual crises. One staff member indicated, "Peer support is extremely helpful for individual women in emotional crisis." PST recipients also relayed that peer support helped in crisis intervention. They claimed that the PST had helped them either practically, emotionally, or both.

The PST also plays an important role in crisis prevention. Many staff and inmates indicated that they appreciated this. Some staff members believed that the PST prevented more crises than staff were aware of. Inmates indicated that they used the PST service for a variety of reasons including feelings of: depression, isolation, self-injury or suicide. In helping inmates in this way, the PST has prevented individual crises. Some staff members relayed an example of the PST aiding in crisis intervention. They recalled a time when a woman in segregation felt suicidal and the only resource that was effective in helping her was peer support counseling.

Coordinators were also asked to rate how effective they found the PST program for preventing or assisting institutional crises (as opposed to individual inmates' crises) on a scale of 1 (not at all helpful) to 10 (very helpful). One Coordinator provided a rating of 8.5. The other Coordinator chose not to provide a rating. This Coordinator reported that PST was more valuable in assisting with individual crises than with institutional crises. Further, it was difficult to assess whether or not the PST was preventative in institutional crises because the program was fairly new to the facility and there are few members on the team. As an example the Coordinator suggested that there was a drug problem at Joliette and, to date, the PST had not been able to help deal with this. Staff survey results indicate that staff feel the PST is somewhat effective in institutional crisis. On a scale of 1 (not at all effective) to 10 (very effective) they gave a mean rating of 6.3.

Evaluation results indicate that the PST is also helpful in post-crisis resolution. Both inmates and staff mentioned that the PST was called upon to help inmates deal with the aftermath of crisis situations that had passed.

The PST is also beneficial to inmates who are isolated from the general offender population. Results indicate that inmates in segregation who were in crisis as well as inmates with mental health problems had used the peer support service as a

resource to talk to about their problems. A staff member commented, "One team member takes a woman in the mental health unit for a walk everyday." The PST is an important resource for inmates in segregation and inmates with mental health problems who are isolated from the general offender population.

In summary, the PST appears to be very effective in individual crisis intervention and somewhat effective in institutional crisis intervention. The PST is also a resource in post crisis resolution. Peer support is helpful to inmates who are isolated from the general offender population because they are in segregation or because the suffer from mental health problems.

### 4.2. Did the atmosphere and management of the facility improve after implementation of the PST program?

Results of the offender survey, presented earlier, suggest that only a few inmates perceived a difference in the atmosphere at Joliette Institution as a result of the implementation of the PST program. Approximately one third of the staff surveyed indicated that they perceived the atmosphere at Joliette had changed since the implementation of program. All staff and inmate survey respondents who specified changes, indicated they thought the atmosphere had changed positively since program implementation.

Interview data from both staff and inmates supported the survey results. Few staff and interview respondents indicated they perceived a change in the atmosphere at Joliette Institution after implementation of the PST program. Staff members who did notice a change, indicated a variety of positive changes. These include improvement in the relationships between inmates, inmates and staff and team members and staff. Some respondents also indicated a general decrease in the level of tension and amount of violence amongst the population at the institution. One staff member noted, "The PST creates more cohesion amongst the inmates."

Only one inmate interview respondent suggested a negative effect of the PST on the atmosphere at the institution. She suggested that the PST deteriorated the

atmosphere at Joliette institution when PST members breached recipients' confidentiality.

Both inmates and staff provided a few reasons why they had not perceived a change in the atmosphere at the institution since the implementation of the PST program. The most common reason was that the program was new to the institution. One staff member explained, "The program is still in its infancy. It's too early to tell if the atmosphere has changed." Another reason provided for the lack of impact of the PST on the atmosphere was that there were only three team members. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, results indicate that only one of the team members was providing peer counseling on a regular basis. Taking this into consideration, it is not surprising that the PST program has not had a perceived effect on the atmosphere at the institution. It would be difficult for one active team member to make an impact on the atmosphere. Some staff members indicated that there was always a good atmosphere at the institution and therefore, it was difficult to detect any positive changes to this atmosphere after the implementation of the PST.

In summary, the majority of the staff and inmates at Joliette Institution indicated that they had not noticed any changes in the atmosphere since the implementation of the PST program. All but one of the staff and inmate respondents that noticed a change in the atmosphere indicated that the change was positive.

It is important to note that the changes noticed in the atmosphere after the implementation of the PST program may not be directly related to the program. It is also important to note that there is potential for the PST program to have an effect on the atmosphere at Joliette in the future.

### 4.3. Are the offenders involved in the program empowered by it?

Results of both staff and inmates interviews reveal that offenders involved in the PST program are empowered by it. Team members indicated that the group discussions during training helped them grow personally and learn about women's issues. The team members also felt that they were in control of the program. Results of interviews indicate that a feeling of ownership of the peer support program gave team members

a sense of pride. Other inmates also noted the benefits of the PST program for team members. One inmate who hoped to one day participate in PST training commented, "Helping others increases the self-esteem of team members. The best thing about the PST are the skills the women get from training."

Staff members also indicated they thought the peer support program was empowering for inmates. One staff member expressed, "Being a team member gives them confidence, a sense of helping others and a sense of responsibility. They know the staff has confidence in them. Since they learn to work with others, they can apply what they learn in everyday life." Staff indicated that being on the PST gave team members an important role in the institution as well as a sense of confidence and a good feeling about themselves. Another staff member indicated that he had noticed growth and empowerment in team members since their involvement in the program. "I have noticed more responsibility, self-esteem, self-worth, confidence and better self-image in the team members since they took the training and became part of the team." The PST Coordinator indicated that one of the former team members was released to transitional housing and took the initiative to set up a PST program at that site.

Staff acknowledged that the PST service was empowering for PST recipients as well. The tenets of the peer support program suggest that 'recipients' direct their own care and, therefore may find their experience with PST empowering. More specifically, recipients of peer support may request the service when they feel they need it. In addition to this, recipients can request the team member to whom they would like to speak. Finally, PST recipients have control over the terms of their support session. This includes when to begin and end the session as well as choosing which particular issues to discuss during the course of the session. As such, PST recipients as well as team members may be empowered by the peer support service.

## 5. Does the program create any unintended positive or negative effects?

### 5.1. Does training for the PST program reinforce effects of other programs that the Team members are participating in? Does it help to define their interests?

Both inmates and staff indicated that the PST reinforced the effects of other institutional programs for team members. One staff member remarked on the similarity between some components of the PST training and the Cognitive Skills program. For example, both the Cognitive Skills program and the PST program teach offenders how to resolve problems in an appropriate way.

Participation in the PST program can also help define team members' interests and long-term goals in a prosocial, constructive manner. One of the team members expressed an interest in pursuing a career in counseling after leaving the institution. As mentioned earlier, a former team member who had been released to a transitional house was implementing a peer support program there. The team members expressed that the program had helped them gain awareness of women's issues as well as improved their skills in dealing effectively with others. She stated, "I understand more about particular issues that effect the women (e.g. substance abuse) and I deal better with my own problems now. I will do some kind of therapy for employment when I get out." All team members agreed that the skills they learned in PST training would be valuable to them upon release into the community.

### 5.2. Do team members experience pressure and burnout due to peer counseling?

Two out of three team members at Joliette indicated no burnout or pressure associated with peer counseling. One of the team members gave specific personal reasons to explain why she found it hard to deal with demands for counseling. She indicated that she dealt with PST demands she could not handle by refusing to provide counseling. Being able to refuse a request for counseling is a precautionary measure in place at Joliette Institution to prevent burnout of PST members. There are other precautionary measures that are also in place. First, team members are encouraged to take temporary leave from the team if they are feeling burnt out or

have personal stress. Second, PST is not permitted at Joliette Institution between the hours of 10:00pm and 8:00am in order to give team members a break from counseling. It is important to consider that this precaution may cause distress to team members and recipients who are not able to adequately complete a PST session before 10:00pm or who need to use the PST service during the time when it is unavailable. A final precaution taken to safeguard against burnout is provided by staff. If a team member has been through a particularly "rough" session, the staff will meet with her for debriefing.

Membership on the PST team is accompanied by certain expectations. The PST members indicated that their role in the inmate population had changed since they became team members. For instance, they indicated they are aware that they are role models and examples for other inmates. Although team members did not complain about their change in role in the inmate population after becoming a peer counsellor, it seems logical that some pressure may come from acting as a role model for peers.

### 5.3. Do any negative side effects result from the PST program?

Both staff and inmates expressed issues that were perceived to be negative 'side effects' of the PST program. First, the issue of breach of confidentiality surfaced frequently throughout both the interviews. Some staff and inmates indicated that PST members had breached confidentiality of PST recipients by revealing information about the PST session to the inmate population. According to the staff, this happened infrequently but according to some inmates, this happened on a more regular basis. Other staff and inmates were not sure if PST members breached recipients' confidentiality but they suspected this may be the case. One staff member commented, "There may be a problem with the team member keeping what they say confidential. It may be difficult for a team member to keep a secret because she may be coaxed by other inmates to talk." Breaching a recipient's confidentiality would likely have a negative affect on the recipient as well as the general atmosphere at the institution. As mentioned earlier, some inmates preferred to talk to PST members rather than staff because of fears this would be documented in their file and could be

used "against" them. If a team member were to breach the confidentiality of a recipient, the trust that recipients have for team members would be violated. The PST would, therefore, no longer be a resource upon which inmates could rely. In order to prevent breaches of confidentiality, a PST member will be removed from the team if there is evidence that she has breached confidentiality. It is however, difficult for staff to detect and prove that a breach of confidentiality has occurred.

Results indicated a second negative side effect of the PST. Some staff and inmates believed that the PST creates a hierarchy amongst the inmate population. This notion was reinforced by some team members exhibiting airs of superiority, and by some staff treating PST members preferentially in comparison to other inmates. While the graduation ceremony is a source of pride for team members, it may cause some inmates to feel that team members are treated differently than themselves and that the PST is more important than other programs at the institution. In addition, some inmates are selected for PST training while others are refused. This may cause some offenders to feel that there is a hierarchy between those offenders who are selected for training and these who are refused for PST training.

A related problem suggested by a few inmates is that some team members try to "control" PST recipients too much. These inmates feel that the PST members make decisions for recipients and insist on how they should act. One inmate claimed that team members feel they can control PST recipients because they feel superior to them.

Another issue related to some inmates perceiving a hierarchy between themselves and team members, is that team members can choose whether or not to provide peer counseling. This choice is not given to team members so they can select *who* they will provide counseling to, but rather, so they can decide whether or not they feel they are able to provide counseling. Some inmates feel that by choosing whether or not to provide a PST session, team members may alienate specific inmates for inappropriate reasons. It could be detrimental to an inmate to be refused peer counseling from a team member when they are in need. For example, the inmate requesting counseling may feel rejected from their peers.

Although there is tension between some inmates and team members because they perceive a hierarchy between PST members and the general offender population, some tension between members of the PST also seems to exist. For example, some team members were concerned that other team members may have breached confidentiality. Team members also questioned each other intentions regarding peer support. Overall, there seemed to be little communication and interaction between PST members. Interview results indicate that some staff and inmates view the PST members as role models for other inmates. By lacking cohesion as a team, PST members may not be serving as good examples for other inmates.

Another issue that was perceived to be a negative 'side effect' of the PST program by some staff members was misuse of the PST program. This misuse includes PST members using a support session as an excuse to visit and chat with other inmates or to transport messages and contraband to inmates in segregation and in the general population. Staff members suspected that misuse of the PST rarely occurred. They also, however, indicated that it was difficult for staff to monitor potential misuse of the PST. Some staff members indicated that there was a potential for misuse of the PST program but they did not suspect this was currently happening.

Another negative effect of the PST program comes from the lack of guidelines on how to proceed with a request for peer counseling. This creates tension between the inmates involved in the session (team members and recipients) and staff. For example, some inmates (including PST members) indicated that they resented when a staff member limited their PST session to half an hour when they needed more time to complete the session. As there is no specific rule limiting the duration of a PST session (other than if it proceeds past 10:00pm) offenders claim they cannot understand why staff limit PST sessions.

Also, there is no designated locale for providing PST sessions. Some inmates indicated they resented being told to provide peer support outside in the cold. Designating specific areas that can be used for PST as well as flexibility of the time duration for sessions would help ease some of the tension between staff and team members.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Summary of Findings

At the time data collection for this evaluation took place, the PST program at Joliette was new to the facility. Despite this, the program seems to have developed its own place and function. In general, both inmates and staff are aware of the PST program and rate it positively. Further, a SO for the program would help define its function and guidelines. Having a SO would be beneficial in that it would formalize aspects of the program such as appropriate locales and acceptable duration for PST sessions.

The PST program at Joliette generally serves the targeted population. Approximately half of the inmates surveyed and a third of the inmates interviewed had received peer counseling on at least one occasion for a variety of reasons. The PST is especially useful for inmates in segregation and inmates with mental health problems. Inmates who have received peer counseling reported being satisfied with it.

There is considerable variability in how frequently team members provided peer counseling. It appears one of the team members is active on a very regular basis while another is rarely active.

Both inmates and staff recognize that the PST provides inmates with an alternative to only talking to staff. The PST benefits both staff and inmates. Some inmates may not benefit from PST because they choose not to seek peer support for the following reasons. First, some inmates indicated they did not feel the need to use peer counseling. Second, some of them hesitated to request PST because they felt their confidentiality would be breached. Third, some are deterred from receiving peer counseling because of a language barrier between themselves and the team members. Finally, some inmates are hesitant to use the peer support service because they are not acquainted with the team members.

The second issue addressed in the present evaluation was whether the Coordinator had sufficient time, acknowledgement and support for activities regarding the program. The Coordinator and Co-coordinator of the PST program indicated that they had sufficient acknowledgement from the institution for the program. Interestingly, the

PST program at Joliette is considered equivalent to other correctional programs. They also indicated that they had sufficient time and monetary support to run the program.

The training at Joliette was rated positively by those involved. The PST training manual was also considered informative and helpful. The Coordinators and volunteer facilitators followed the broad concepts outlined in the training manual but modified the content somewhat. Both staff and inmates believed that team members benefited personally from training. Only bilingual inmates can participate in training.

Team members' participation in establishing the program is generally acknowledged and balanced with their other duties. There are precautions in place at Joliette to help team members balance peer support with their other duties. Some concerns raised were possible misuse and breaching recipients' confidentiality. Some also perceived a hierarchy between PST members and the general offender population.

The third issue addressed in this evaluation was whether the activities of the program are presented in a way that its goals can be achieved. Generally, the population at Joliette is aware that the PST program exists. Despite this, there is a need to create awareness of the particulars of the PST program. Staff and inmates suggested that this can be done through posting and distributing information about the PST and introducing the PST to staff and inmates. A need to inform new admissions to the institution about the PST was also indicated. Those who have received peer support indicate they were satisfied and PST met their needs.

Results of this evaluation indicate some possible improvements could be made in the area of communication between the Coordinator, staff and team members at Joliette. First, there is no Steering Committee or PST chair. Second, there are few scheduled meetings between the Coordinator and team members and between the team members themselves. Third, team members rarely keep records of their counseling. Finally, some staff members do not inform PST members and recipients why they choose certain locales for PST sessions or why they limit certain PST sessions to half an hour.

The fourth issue addressed in this evaluation was whether the PST program was effective. In assessing PST's role in crisis intervention, it was found that the team plays an effective role in individual crisis intervention and a somewhat effective role in institutional crisis intervention. The PST at Joliette also plays a role in post crisis resolution.

Both staff and inmates perceived very little change in the atmosphere at Joliette since the implementation of the PST program. The majority of individuals who commented on the change in environment indicated positive changes.

The final evaluation issue addressed in this report was whether the program created any unintended positive or negative effects. The PST program helps members define their goals and interests and reinforces the effects of other programs. The benefits of the PST program for all involved is clear and conclusive. Some wondered if PST sessions were used to visit friends or to transport contraband, yet misuse of the program was described as probably infrequent. Another potential negative effect of the PST program is the creation of a hierarchy amongst the offender population that was mentioned earlier. Finally, the potential for a team member to breach a recipient's confidentiality is a potential negative effect of the PST program. Other than those mentioned above, evaluation results indicate no significant negative effects of the PST program. The positive effects appear to exceed the negative effects.

**Study Limitations**

It is important to discuss some limitations to this evaluation. First, the small sample size achieved for this evaluation precluded our ability to detect (potential) between-group differences. Furthermore, the small number of team members who responded to survey data prevented analyzing their characteristics and differences between team members and other inmates.

Second, difficulties were encountered regarding analyses of pre versus post program measures. The pre data collected for the self-esteem scale and CESI may have been completed by different individuals than the post data for these same measures. It is impossible to determine whether the same individuals completed the pre and post

battery. No identifier was indicated so comparison of pre and post program differences were, therefore not informative.

A third limitation of this evaluation is that the sample in this study may have been somewhat biased. As mentioned earlier, the researchers with the help of team members and the Coordinator recruited interview participants upon their arrival to Joliette. This was done to deal with the low compliance rate for interviews. Difficulty obtaining interview participants is a common dilemma in research with volunteer participants. It is possible that inmates who have a positive view of the PST program would be more willing to participate in the evaluation study than those who have a negative view of the program. In addition, those with closer relationships to the team members or psychologist are both more likely to be approached, *and* are more likely to respond to requests for participation. Therefore, a social desirability response bias may have affected results.

**Recommendations for potential program improvement**

Consistent with the results of the pilot investigation the PST training was greatly valued at Joliette. Results of the PST program at Joliette support those at EIFW in clarifying that the PST program benefits three (not mutually exclusive) groups of women: peer support recipients, those who complete the training, and those who graduate and become PST members. Thus, it is suggested that the opportunity for training for peer support be presented differently to offenders (Blanchette & Eljdupovic-Guzina, 1998).

The current screening criteria to select women for PST is geared towards selecting those women who would be most appropriate to provide support to their peers. Although, all institutional programs require screening criteria to maximize treatment effects, amendment of the PST screening criteria would make the training more inclusive for all inmates. Results of the evaluation of the PST program at Joliette suggest that several offenders could participate in (and benefit from) PST training, though they would not necessarily be ideal candidates for PST membership.

In this sense, the training could be offered as a program from which a higher proportion of women would complete the training, but only a few women would become 'official' PST members. Results of the current evaluation support the recommendation of the pilot study at EIFW for a two-tier process whereby the first phase involves completing PST training (and graduation), and the second phase entails official membership on the PST team. Stringent screening criteria would be implemented for phase two of this process. This two-tier strategy would alleviate feelings of inferiority for those women who complete the training but *do not* become members of the PST.

Results of the evaluation at Joliette revealed that the majority of staff and inmates were aware of the existence of the PST program. The population at the institution could, however benefit from better communication of the details of how the PST program functions. Channels for this communication could include posting and distributing information to staff and offenders via posters, pamphlets and email messages. Information sessions including question and answer periods for both staff

and inmates would also be beneficial. In addition, team members could actively recruit new trainees explaining the PST duties to them. Some inmates indicated that the availability of the PST service needs to be better communicated to offenders upon their admission to Joliette. Having team members introduce themselves to inmates upon their admission would be beneficial. It would ensure that new admissions to the institution were aware of the availability of the peer support service.

It is also suggested that the role of the PST be clarified and more structure be imposed. A Standing Order would help formalize the PST program with guidelines for the details of the program (e.g. where PST sessions can occur and acceptable duration of PST sessions). There is also a need to improve communication between the staff and team members and between the team members themselves. Inmates have expressed frustration from the discrepancy in regulations placed on peer support sessions such as where the session will take place. Formally, laying out guidelines for the PST will help resolve this frustration and tension that exists between inmates and staff over these issues.

Regularly scheduled communication sessions between the team members and staff are lacking. Although the Coordinator is available to meet with the team any time the need arises, scheduled meetings for the group would be beneficial. Evaluation results indicate a lack of cohesion amongst members of the PST. Regular meetings would help address this problem and potentially resolve it. The Coordinator could act as a liaison for communication of information between the PST and other staff members by relaying information from the PST to staff. In addition, team members need to communicate more effectively with the Coordinator via records of the peer counseling they provide. These records involve basic information about each PST session team members provide, like the name of the PST member, date and time of session, type of problem encountered, and recommendations offered (if any). The records only take a few minutes to complete. Without these records it is difficult for the Coordinator to monitor PST activity and for PST members to receive feedback on the counseling they are providing. Team members should be reminded to provide this information regularly.

There is also no process by which PST members at Joliette can receive feedback from staff or their peers. Improving exchange of information between team members and the staff would benefit the PST program at Joliette. Therefore, it is suggested that PST members be provided with an opportunity to discuss, and receive feedback regarding their support work.

Communication regarding performance on the PST could be improved by regularly scheduled performance appraisals with the PST Coordinator. This would ensure that PST members had an opportunity to discuss the issues and problems they had encountered in supporting their peers, and enable the Coordinator to monitor their work. As mentioned earlier, there was a lot of variability in how frequently the team members provided peer support. This could help address the reasons for this. It is important to note that anonymity of the PST recipient should be maintained through all feedback sessions, with the PST member disclosing basic details of the session, without providing the recipient's name.

Feedback from the general offender population may also be beneficial to the PST program. A suggestion box for the PST would provide inmates with an opportunity to make anonymous comments regarding the PST program.

Results of this evaluation also revealed that some inmates chose not to receive peer counseling because they were concerned with confidentiality by PST members. Enforcing a 'zero tolerance' for certain behaviours (breaches of confidentiality, drug use) may help deal with the problem of breach of confidentiality. Encouraging team members to keep records of their counseling sessions would also help deal with this problem. Furthermore, keeping records of support sessions would help deal with the perceived problem of team members using the PST to visit, chat or transport contraband. PST members would have to account for every session they provided.

Communication between the PST Coordinators at the different women's facilities would provide the Coordinators with suggestions and exchange of information regarding the PST program. This could help the PST Coordinators at the different facilities to learn from each others experiences. All PST Coordinators could post electronic mail messages and/or meet annually in person.

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## APPENDIX A:

### Rosenberg's self-esteem scale

**Instructions:**
Please indicate your degree of agreement with each of the following statements by circling the appropriate option for each statement.
S = Strongly Agree
A = Agree
D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
   SA A D SD
2. At times I think I am no good at all.
   SA A D SD
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
   SA A D SD
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
   SA A D SD
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
   SA A D SD
6. I certainly feel useless at times.
   SA A D SD
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
   SA A D SD
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
   SA A D SD
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
   SA A D SD
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
    SA A D SD

## APPENDIX B:

### Sociometric Test

We would like a better understanding of the relationships between women at the facility. For that reason, it would be of great help if you would provide answers to the following question. **Your responses are entirely confidential!**

Name _____ Date _____

Who do you go to for moral support?
*Please indicate first and last names, if possible.*

First choice: _____

Second choice: _____

Third choice: _____

## APPENDIX C:

### Correctional Environment Status Inventory

Facility:_____ Date(dd/mm/yy): ____ / ____ / ____

This questionnaire is being sent to you as part of the routine evaluation of this facility. It contains statements about your unit, the correctional staff at this facility and about you. Please take the time to complete the questionnaire. There is no need to write your name on the questionnaire. This will ensure that the results are confidential.

Once you have finished, place the completed questionnaire in the envelope, which is enclosed, and seal the envelope. Then give it to staff to return. Please take no longer than 5 days to return the package.

(A) Are you: (circle 1 or 2)
1 male
2 female

(B) How old are you?_____

(C) Are you an Aboriginal person? (circle 1 or 2)

1 yes
1 no

(D) How long is your current jail sentence? (circle 1 or 2)
1 2 years to 4 years
2 four years or more

(E) Have you been in jail before? (circle 1 or 2)
1 yes
2 no

On the next page, there are statements which describe the kinds of things that might go on in your facility and other statements which describe the way you may be feeling or thinking. Each statement is followed by the numbers 1 to 5. As you read each statement, circle a number from 1 to 5.

Circle **'1'** if what the statement describes <u>never</u> happens
Circle **'2'** if it happens <u>once in a while</u>
Circle **'3'** if it happens <u>often</u>
Circle **'4'** if it happens <u>most of the time</u>
Circle **'5'** if it <u>always</u> happens

**Do not circle a number if you are not sure about what the statement means or <u>if it is not applicable to your facility.</u> Do not circle more than one number for a statement. Please note also that "correctional staff" refers to mainly to Primary Workers, though may also include Team Leaders, Mental Health personnel, and Management.**

**1=NEVER 2=ONCE IN A WHILE 3=OFTEN 4=MOST OF THE TIME 5=ALWAYS**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | **Correctional staff ignore me.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Correctional staff take into consideration residents' explanations for things that happen at the facility. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | **Correctional staff keep residents waiting for appointments.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Correctional staff act on residents' suggestions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | **Correctional staff apologize to residents when they have made a mistake.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | When correctional staff disagree with each other, they work it out. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | **If I am being treated unfairly by a primary worker, I get a fair hearing.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | Correctional staff change their minds about what we should be doing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | **Correctional staff help residents to resolve arguments.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | When a resident's programme is changed, a primary worker explains why. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. | **Correctional staff encourage me to try new ways of doing things.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | Correctional staff and residents say how they feel about each other. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | **Before correctional staff give out a ticket, they try to find out what happened.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. | The more mature residents at the facility help take care of the less mature ones. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | **Facility meetings start on time.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | Correctional staff let me know when they think I've done something really good. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. | **Correctional staff pay attention to residents.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. | Correctional staff get along well with each other. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. | **Some residents are very insulting to others at this facility.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. | I speak to correctional staff respectfully. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. | **On this facility it is OK to speak your mind.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. | It is OK for residents to disagree openly with primary workers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. | **Correctional staff agree on what kinds of behaviours are acceptable.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. | I feel comfortable telling correctional staff how I feel. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. | **I hide my real feelings from other residents.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. | Residents at the facility call each other names. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. | **I like having correctional staff participate in our activities.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. | I feel safe in confronting other residents who are doing something they shouldn't be doing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. | **I try to help other residents on my facility to work out their problems.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. | When residents get into trouble, it's pretty clear why. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. | **Correctional staff work as a team.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. | This is a very well organized facility. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. | **If a resident doesn't want to shower regularly, the other residents on the facility deal with it.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. | Correctional staff help me to deal with my anger in a better way. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. | **Correctional staff encourage residents to think about their goals.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. | This is a clean facility. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**The next set of questions asks you to show how much you agree with each statement. Again, circle a number from 1 to 5. Once again, "correctional staff" refers to mainly to Primary Workers, though may also include Team Leaders, Mental Health personnel, and Management.**

1=COMPLETELY DISAGREE 2=DISAGREE A BIT 3=AGREE A BIT 4=MOSTLY AGREE 5=COMPLETELY AGREE

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 37. | Residents are expected to share their personal problems with each other. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. | Correctional staff here are trying to help me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. | I am trying to improve and get better. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. | The other residents at this facility help me to understand myself. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41. | I know what my next steps will be when I am released. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 42. | Correctional staff are interested in how I am doing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. | Getting into treatment programs is important to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44. | I respect the correctional staff. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 45. | Correctional staff care about me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 46. | Residents know what jobs need to be done and when they need to get them done. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 47. | Correctional staff help me to feel that I can stay out of jail in the future. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 48. | Correctional staff prefer to stay in their offices rather than spend time with residents. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 49. | Rules at this facility are clear. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 50. | I am solving the problems that got me in here. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 51. | I know what kinds of behaviour will get me into trouble. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 52. | I want to change the way I am. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 53. | Correctional staff would like to know how I'm doing once I have been released. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 54. | I am learning better ways of solving my problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 55. | Residents are encouraged to plan for the future. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 56. | The other residents at the facility have nothing to offer me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 57. | I care about what happens to the other residents. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 58. | I have a really good sense of what I should and shouldn't do around here. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 59. | When I arrived, the other residents helped me to learn how things work around here. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 60. | Correctional staff are more interested in their pay checks than in me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 61. | Correctional staff think that only residents are responsible for problems at the facility. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 62. | My case manager is interested in how I am doing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 63. | I like most of the residents at this facility. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 64. | At this facility, every resident is out for herself. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 65. | I will have to solve my problems if I want to stay out of jail. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 66. | Correctional staff help me to feel that I can manage my life better than I have in the past. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Please check your questionnaire to make sure that you have not overlooked any statements. On the reverse side of this page, feel free to make note of any important aspects of the prison environment that this questionnaire did not cover.

## APPENDIX D:

## Items in CESI Scales and Subscales

**Scale: Staff Involvement**

*Subscale: Responsive Staff*

Correctional staff take into consideration resident's explanations for things that happen at the facility

Correctional staff act on resident's suggestions

Correctional staff apologize to residents when they have made a mistake

If I am being treated unfairly by a correctional officer, I get a fair hearing

When a resident's program is changed, a correctional officer explains why

Before correctional staff give out a ticket, they try to find out what happened

*Subscale: Caring Staff*

Correctional staff are interested in how I am doing

Correctional staff care about me

Correctional staff would like to know how I'm doing once I have been released

My case manager is interested in how I am doing

*Subscale: Disinterested Staff*

Correctional staff keep residents waiting for appointments

Correctional staff prefer to stay in their offices rather than spend time with residents

Correctional staff ignore me

Correctional staff are more interested in their pay checks than in me

Correctional staff think that only residents are responsible for problems on the facility

**Scale: Staff Treatment Focus**

*Subscale: Encouragement*

Correctional staff pay attention to residents

Correctional staff help me to deal with my anger in a better way

Correctional staff encourage residents to think about their goals

Correctional staff are trying to help me

Correctional staff help me feel that I can stay out of trouble

Residents are encouraged to plan for the future

Correctional staff help me to feel that I can manage my life better than I have in the past

*Subscale: Open Communication*

Correctional staff help residents to resolve arguments

Correctional staff encourage me to try new ways of doing things

Correctional staff and residents say how they feel about each other

Correctional staff let me know when they think I've done something good

It is OK for residents to disagree openly with correctional officers

I feel comfortable telling correctional staff how I feel

**Scale: Staff Cohesion**

When correctional staff disagree with each other, they work it out

Correctional staff get along well with each other

I speak to correctional staff respectfully

Correctional staff agree on what kinds of behaviours are acceptable

I like having correctional staff participate in our activities

Correctional staff work as a team

I respect the correctional staff

**Scale: Clarity & Organization**

Rules at this facility are clear

Facility meetings start on time

When residents get into trouble, it's pretty clear why

I have a really good sense of what I should and shouldn't do around here

Correctional staff change their minds about what we should be doing

This is a clean facility

Residents know what jobs need to be done and when they need to get them done

This is a very well organized facility

**Scale: Offender Treatment Orientation**

*Subscale: Problem Solving*

I am solving the problems that got me in here

I know what kinds of behaviours will get me into trouble

I am learning better ways of solving my problems

I will have to solve my problems if I want to stay out of jail

I want to change the way I am

*Subscale: Change Orientation*

On this facility it is OK to speak your mind

I am trying to improve and get better

I know what my next steps will be when I am released

Getting into treatment programs is important to me

Residents are expected to share their personal problems with each other

**Scale: Offender Relationships**

*Subscale: Mutual Caring*

Correctional staff get along well with each other

The other residents on this facility help me to understand myself

The other residents on the facility have nothing to offer me

I care about what happens to the other residents

When I arrived, the other residents helped me learn how things work around here

I like most of the residents on this facility

At this facility, every resident is out for herself

*Subscale: Peer Support*

The more mature residents on the facility help take care of the less mature ones

I feel safe in confronting other residents who are doing something they shouldn't be doing

I try to help other residents on my facility to work out their problems

If a resident doesn't want to shower regularly, the other residents on the facility deal with it

*Subscale: Hostility*

Some residents are very insulting to others on the facility

I hide my real feelings from other residents

Residents at this facility call each other names

**APPENDIX E:**

**Survey Formats**

OFFENDER SURVEY

The Peer Support Team (PST) is a peer counseling service for all women in this facility. PST volunteers are trained in peer counseling and crisis intervention counseling. If you are feeling depressed, angry, suicidal, or upset the PST may be able to help. The counseling is entirely confidential.

In order to understand how this process is going and to find ways to make it even better, we would appreciate if you would fill out this questionnaire and tell us how you feel about Peer Support.

**Your responses will be kept entirely confidential and your anonymity is guaranteed.**

1. How old are you? _____

2. How long is your current sentence? _____

3. How long have you been incarcerated? _____

4. How long have you been at this facility? _____

5. Were you aware of PST Program and the possibility to receive support and counseling from your peers (PST member)?
   _____ Yes _____ No

6. If yes, how did you find out about it?
   _____ saw notices, postings
   _____ another offender told you
   _____ you were approached by the Team member who explained theprogram to you
   _____ other

*(specify)*_____

7. Do you know who the Team members are?
   _____ Yes _____ No

8. Do you know how to submit a request for counseling?
   _____ Yes _____ No

9. How many times have you asked to see a PST member?
_____ Never
_____ Once
_____ 2 -5 times
_____ More than 5 times

10. If you have **NOT** asked to see a PST member, is it because:
_____ You did not know about PST?
_____ You haven't needed to?
_____ You do not feel comfortable with anyone on the PST?
_____ You are worried about confidentiality?
_____ You are worried what other people might think?
_____ You are a PST member
_____ Other reason
*(specify)*_____
_____

11. Have you ever asked to see a PST member and been told that you could not see one?
_____ Yes _____ No

12. Is there anything that would make you feel more comfortable to ask to see a PST member? *(If yes, please specify)*
_____

13. If you **HAVE ASKED** for peer counseling, was your request *(check both if appropriate):*

_____ Formal (you approached PST member or staff and a meeting was organized)

_____ Informal (you and the PST member got together and talked during your free time without any specific arrangements being made)

14. Why did you ask for peer counseling? *(please check all that apply)*
___ psychologist or other professional staff was not available
___ argument with staff
___ argument with another offender
___ you felt like injuring yourself
___ depressed
___ you felt suicidal
___ you were upset/angry
___ you felt very lonely
___ other *(specify)*
_____
_____

15. How helpful was the peer counseling?
*(please circle one number)*

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
Not helpful at all — Somewhat helpful — Very helpful

16. Did peer counseling fulfill your expectations?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
Not at all — Somewhat — Entirely

17. If yes, in what way?

_____

_____

18. If no, why not?

_____

_____

19. How satisfied were you with promptness of the counseling being organized for you upon your request?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
Not at all — Somewhat — Entirely

20. How long did you have to wait for staff to get you in touch with PST member?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
Not long — Very long

21. How long did you have to wait for the counselor to respond to your request?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
Not long — Very long

22. Were you 'excused' from other duties in order to be able to receive peer counseling?
___ Yes ___ No

23. If Peer Support counseling **did not help**, could you please tell us why?

_____

_____

24. Have you noticed any changes in the general atmosphere on the facility, or the relationship between staff and offenders and amongst offenders due to the PST Program?

_____ No

_____ Yes What kind?

_____

_____

25. Do you believe that peer counseling (or the Peer Support Program) is ever used for other purposes (e.g., to chat, to avoid work, and so on)?

_____ No

_____ Yes

How?_____

_____

26. Do you feel that you have gained a better understanding of women's issues through the PST Program? *(If yes, please explain)*

_____ No

_____ Yes- How?_____

If you **have received** peer counseling, would you be willing to talk more about it with the researcher? If yes, please write your name and we will contact you. We would like to assure you that our conversation will be entirely confidential.

_____

**Yes**, I am willing to talk about my experiences with peer counseling.

**Name** _____ **Date** _____

**SURVEY FOR STAFF**

This questionnaire is designed to determine the effectiveness of the Peer Support Team program at your facility. As you know, this program represents a peer counseling service for all women offenders which is provided by trained offenders. PST volunteers are trained in peer counseling and crisis intervention counseling. If an offender is feeling depressed, angry, suicidal, or upset, she may require the help of the PST member, or the PST member may provide help by being there with the woman in distress, without her formally requesting counseling.

We would appreciate if you would respond to the following questions. Your perceptions and feelings about this program are of great importance for its evaluation. The questionnaire is anonymous, and your responses will be kept entirely confidential.

We would also like to talk to you about this program, since we believe that an interview can provide better understanding of your own personal opinions about this program. If you are willing to volunteer for an interview, please indicate so at the bottom of this questionnaire.

1. How did you find out about the PST Program?

   _____ Psychologist told you

   _____ Saw postings

   _____ Other *(explain)*

   _____

   _____ I was not aware of it

2. Do you know who Team members are?

   _____ Yes _____ No

3. Do you know how to proceed when an offender requests peer counseling?

_____ No

_____ Yes How?

_____

4. How effective do you find PST Program to be in crisis intervention:

a) With problems of individual offenders?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
Not helpful at all — Somewhat helpful — Very helpful

b) In terms of preventing or assisting in the case of institutional crisis?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
Not helpful at all — Somewhat helpful — Very helpful

5. Have you noticed any changes in the general atmosphere on the facility, relationship between staff and offenders and amongst offenders due to the PST Program?

_____ No

_____ Yes What kind? _____

6. Please indicate the level of trust you have for PST members?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
No trust — Complete trust

Does it vary for different Team members?
_____ Yes _____ No

7. Have you noticed any changes in PST members since their involvement in the Program (how they deal with their personal issues, incarceration; their role in the offender group; their relationship and behaviour towards the staff)?
_____ No

_____ Yes In what way? _____

_____

8. Do you think that PST Program reinforces the positive effects of other programs:

   a) For Team members?

   1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
   not at all a great deal

   b) For all offenders?

   1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
   not at all a great deal

9. Did peer counseling ever create a crisis or a problem that was greater than the original one? *(If yes, please explain)*

   _____ No

   _____ Yes Why and when? _____

   _____

10. Do you feel that counseling sessions are sometimes used by women for other purposes? *(If yes, please explain)*

    _____ No
    _____ Yes How? _____

    _____

**Please answer the following questions if you feel comfortable to do so, otherwise, please feel free to skip them.**

What is your position at this facility? _____

How long have you been in this position? _____

How long have you been working with women offenders? _____

**Would you be willing to have an interview with us regarding this program? The duration of the interview is 20-40 min.**

**Yes Name**_____

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION!**

## APPENDIX F:

## Guidelines for Semi-Structured Interviews

GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW WITH THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

***Description of the PST Program modality***

Please describe the Peer Support Team Program and/or related activities at your facility?

*If different from the one described in the Manual for PST Program*:

Please describe the rationale for establishing the program/activities in this particular way?

What are the goals and aims of the peer support notion and related activities at your facility?

***Establishing the PST Program***

**i) Support**

Do you feel that the PST Program is considered important by the following staff at the facility?

Mental health professionals
1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
Not important at all — Somewhat important — Very important

Primary workers
1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
Not important at all — Somewhat important — Very important

Warden
1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
Not important at all — Somewhat important — Very important

Have you noticed any resistance to the PST Program, either by inmates or staff?

Are the amount of time and energy you put into PST Program acknowledged as part of your regular job?

How is the funding of the program organized?

What would you find helpful for running the program, is there anything that you would need more of, or less of?

**ii) Features of the Program**

How long can an individual be a PST member for?

How many PST members are in a course at a time?

Last time?

How many of those graduated?

How is it decided who graduates? (Who decides?)

Is there an initial screening of potential PST members before the interview?

If so, what screening criteria are used?

Who does the screening?

Is there a standing order for the PST?

**iii) Training**

How helpful do you find the training?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10

Not helpful at all — Somewhat helpful — Very helpful

Do you feel that you covered enough topics during the training?

Was the time devoted to them sufficient?

How useful do you find the Manual for the PST members?

**iv) Balancing PST activities of Team members with other activities at the facility**

Are members attending the training sessions supported (e.g. is peer support acknowledged as regular work)?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
Not at all Somewhat Entirely

Were other staff members expecting them to be somewhere else or to be engage in some other activity?

Was there a graduation ceremony?

Who was invited, and how did the Team members feel about it?

To what extent do you feel that the process from inmate's request for counseling to receiving it, is going smoothly?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
Not at all Somewhat Entirely

How do you perceive Primary Workers' responsiveness to inmate's requests?

How do you perceive PST members' responsiveness/promptness?

***Implementation***

**i) Relationships**

How do you feel about the idea of peers, (i.e. inmates) helping each other?

How would you assess the quality of relationship and the established trust between you and PST members?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
poor moderate very good

How would you assess the quality of relationship and the established trust between PST members and the following staff?

Primary workers 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
poor moderate very good

Mental health professionals 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
poor moderate very good

How would you assess the quality of relationship and the established trust amongst Team members?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
poor moderate very good

How would you assess other meetings and other staff's involvement in the Program?

Have you noticed any changes in the general atmosphere at the facility, relationship between staff and inmates and amongst inmates due to the PST Program?

Have you ever had to deal with policy violations by Team members, complaints by 'recipients' of peer counseling? If so, how did you deal with them?

***Effectiveness of the Program***

**i) Crisis Intervention**

How effective do you find PST Program to be in crisis intervention?

a) For individual inmates?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
Not helpful at all Somewhat helpful Very helpful

b) In terms of preventing or assisting institutional crises?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
Not helpful at all Somewhat helpful Very helpful

**ii) Changes in Team members**

Have you noticed any changes in PST members since their involvement in the Program?

How they deal with their personal issues, incarceration, etc.?

What is their role in the inmate group, their relationship and behavior towards the staff?

***Unintended effects***

Do you think that PST Program reinforces effects of other programs or has other long term positive effects, in the case of Team members and/or all inmates?

Do Team members have a tendency to counsel too much? Are there any mechanisms in place to safeguard against burn-out? Are there any regulations in case of breach of confidentiality?

Do you see a possibility that peer counseling can create an opposite effect and actually increase the crisis in some situations?

Do Team members tend to develop some form of 'elitism' due to their status in the group?

As a Coordinator did you encounter any challenges in balancing the facilitation of the Program and having to step in and take over the process in some situations?

GUIDE FOR THE INTERVIEW WITH PEER SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS

**Establishing the PST Program**

**i) Training**

How helpful did you find the PST training?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
Not helpful at all — Somewhat helpful — Very helpful

Do you feel that you covered enough topics during the training?
Was the time devoted to them sufficient?

How useful do you find the Manual for the PST members?

**ii) Balancing PST duties with other activities at the facility**

Was your attendance of the training sessions supported?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
not at all — somewhat — entirely

Were staff members expecting you to be somewhere else or to be engage in some other activity?

Was there a graduation ceremony? Who was invited? How did you feel about it?

How easy do you find it to fit counseling with your other duties and work?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
very hard — very easy

How satisfied are you with assistance you are getting for fitting in your counseling with other duties and work you are expected to perform?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
not at all — very satisfied

If you counseled during the working hours were you paid for that time?

If you counseled during the night, were you able to take equivalent amount of time off work the following day?

Did you receive enough support, help, financial assistance for events that your Team is organizing or planing?

Have you noticed any resistance to the PST Program either by staff or inmates?

***Implementation***

**i) Meeting the inmates' needs**

What types of requests for counseling do you receive ( formal, informal, other)?

How often do you find yourself 'informally' counseling another woman (i.e., no 'formal' request for peer support was submitted)?.

Have you ever used the PST?

If not, why not?

If you needed to, would you?

**ii) Relationships**

How do you feel about the idea of peers, (i.e., inmates) helping each other?

How satisfied are you with the availability of the Coordinator to have consultations with you when you need them?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
not at all very satisfied

How would you describe Coordinator's relationship with you?

How satisfied are you with support and relationships with other Team members and what you are getting from the Team meetings?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
not at all very satisfied

How would you assess the quality of relationship and the established trust between you and other PST members?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
poor moderate very good

How would you assess the quality of relationship and the established trust between PST members and the following staff?

Primary workers 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
poor moderate very good

Mental health professionals 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10
poor moderate very good

How do you feel about other meetings regarding the PST Program (e.g., Steering Committee)?

***Effectiveness of the Program and Unintended effects***

Did you change in any way as a result of being a PST member (for example, how you deal with your personal issues, incarceration)?

Did your role in the inmate group change?

Did your relationship and behavior towards institutional staff change?

Do you feel that you are in charge of the Program, or rather, that you are being directed to a great extent by the Coordinator and/or other staff?

GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH STAFF

1) Please tell us what is your perception of the Peer Support Team program?

2) How do you feel about peers (i.e., inmates) supporting each other?

2) Do you see any benefits or hindrances of having this program at your facility for Team members, recipients and staff?

4) How do you perceive its effect on the relationship among inmates; inmates and staff?

5) Does it affect the atmosphere at the facility in any way?

6) Do you believe that the Peer Support program is ever used inappropriately (i.e., for alternate purposes, such as socializing, to evade work or other programs, etc.)?

7) Can you suggest any improvements to the PST program?

GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH RECIPIENTS

1) Would you please tell me about your experience with Peer counseling was like?

2) If you feel comfortable doing so, can you explain why you requested peer support? What did the PST member suggest?

3) Did you find it helpful and if yes, why and in what way?

4) Is there anything you particularly liked or disliked about counseling?

5) Are there any changes in this process that you would recommend?

6) How do you feel about the very notion of peers, (i.e., inmates) supporting each other?

GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW WITH THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW ABOUT PEER SUPPORT

**If interviewee DOESN'T know about PST:**

The Peer Support Team (PST) is a peer counseling service for all women in this facility. PST volunteers are trained in peer counseling and crisis intervention counseling. If you are feeling depressed, angry, lonely, or upset the PST may be able to help. The counseling is entirely confidential.

1) Do you think this program is a good idea?
   Why or why not?

2) Would you like to be a member?
   Why or why not?

3) Do you think you would ever use peer support?
   Why or why not?

4) What do you think would be a good way to inform everyone about peer support?

GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW WITH THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER RECEIVED PEER COUNSELLING

1) Why have you never used peer counseling?

2) Would you ever use peer counseling in the future? Why or why not?

3) What are some benefits of peer counseling?

4) What are some disadvantages of peer counseling?

## GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW WITH THOSE WHO WANTED TO BE PST MEMBERS BUT WERE **NOT ACCEPTED** FOR PST TRAINING & THOSE WHO **DID NOT GRADUATE** FROM PST TRAINING

1) Why did you want to be a PST member?

2) How did you feel about not getting accepted as a PST member (or not graduating from PST training)?
   OR Why do you think you were not accepted to be a PST member?
   OR What were you told was the reason you were not accepted as a PST member?

3) How do you feel about others who are or are becoming PST members?

4) Have you used PST in the past?

   Why or why not?

5) Would you use PST in the future?

   Why or why not?

INTERVIEW WITH THOSE IN PST TRAINING

1) How did you find out about becoming a PST member?

2) What made you interested in becoming a PST member?

3) Did you ever receive PST counseling?

4) What made you feel volunteering for PST was right for you?
Or /And – What made feel you were right for volunteering for PST?

5) What do you think your role as a PST member will be?

6) What do you predict are/will be some of the *benefits* associated with your involvement in PST?

7) What do you predict are/will be some of the *problems* associated with your involvement in PST?

8) How far are you in your training?

Lesson # _

9) What do you hope to accomplish/learn from training?

10) How would you rate the training up until now?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Exceptional

Comments: